

Woodwind

WOODWIND

AN ARTS PAPER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FREE





Volume 2
Number 15

1318 35th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20007

(202)965-9650

WOODWIND is open to articles, poetry, photography, graphics, people who are curious. You can either send material to the address above, or call us at 965-9650 anytime during the day for further information.

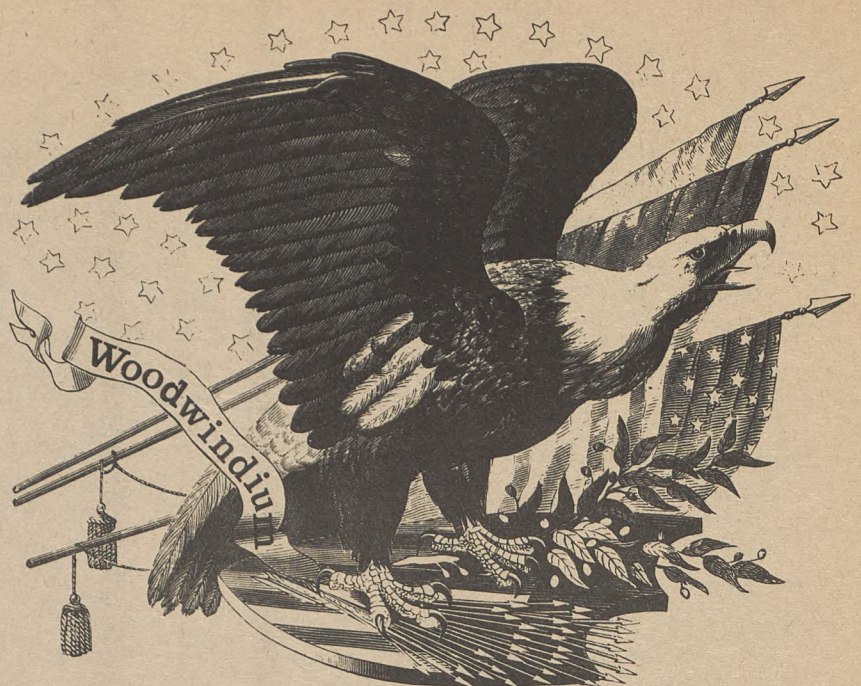
We are particularly looking for writers on dance, film, electronics, reviews of small presses, music, any experimental art forms, sculpture, painting, and so on. If there is something you feel we should write about, or if you think attention should be brought to any particular idea or actuality, let us know.

The cover is by Ascian, from the Corcoran Dupont Center-Workshop

The centerfold is by Lou Stovall of the Corcoran Dupont Center-Workshop

Other vital statistics: Donia Mills-Peter Caruso-Monique Dannenberg-Bill Holland-Ned Chaillet-David Evans-Jim Carroll-Mark Power-Razzle Dazzle (graphic on P. 7)-Brian K. Watson-Paul Jones-Merrill Greene-Tom Shales-Patty Pearson-The Community Bookshop-Judy Willis-Phillip Jason-Dede Baldwin-Tim Healey-Mike Schreiberman-Richard Harrington

We could use some office supplies such as IBM typewriter ribbons for an IBM Exexutive- pens- draft tools- legal paper-file folders-manila envelopes (9 1/2 by 12 1/2)-liquid paper correction fluid- etc. - If you have anything you think we might be able to make use of, please give us a call.



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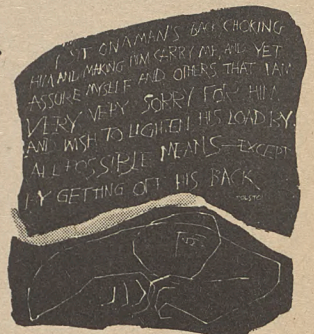
a.



G 30450

Empty Bed Blues is the third two-record set to be issued in a series of five sets by the Empress of Blues—Bessie Smith. The record is specially-priced, and like the previous two sets, continues the re-issues of Bessie's entire collected works.

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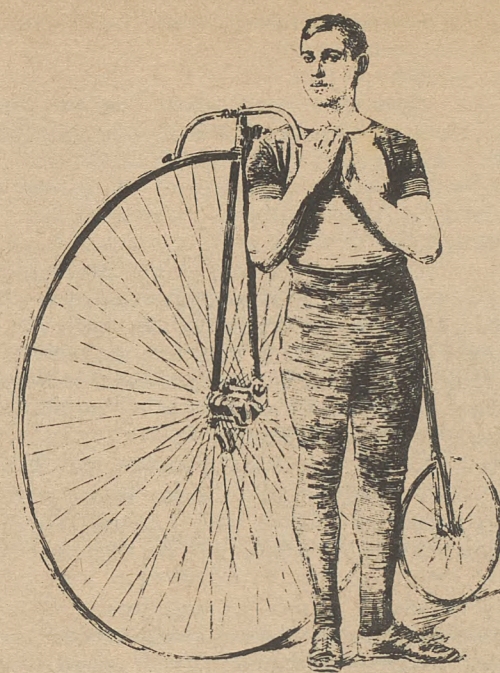
The New Street Gallery

WOODWIND, along with the IN-TOWNER, is now sponsoring a free, open-air ground for people to exhibit their work---painting, sculpture, photos, candles, whatever. The location of the site is the PMI parking lot next to the Ben Bow Restaurant/Bar and the Janus Theatres, at Wisconsin and Hillier Street, NW. Every Sunday from here on in, the land is ours to use to show of the work of our hands and of our minds. There are no specific types of work that can or cannot be exhibited. There are several things that must be done, however, by those people wishing to exhibit. We have worked out an agreement with the PMI people whereby they donate the land to us this one day a week. In return, each exhibitor signs a release, absolving PMI and us of any possible damage or theft that might occur. These are, of course, both things that we neither expect nor want to happen. In addition, each exhibitor will pay a fee of \$1, to cover the time and expense of the person who maintains the cleanliness of the lot and area both before and after the showing. The object of the showings is to give people an opportunity for people to bypass the usual gallery elitism that places arbitrary standards on work. So, if you are interested, give us a call at 965-9650 any day during the week, and ask for Tim Healey, who will be co-ordinating the showings. If you are unclear as to how the thing is run, ask us; if you have ideas for improving this program, tell us. Musicians, you are welcome to come by and play. People in general, this is a good opportunity to help support individual artists, many of whom have no other outlet wherein to sell their creations. Stop by, then.

WE WILL BE THERE EVERY SUNDAY FROM ABOUT TEN IN THE MORNING TILL WHATEVER TIME PEOPLE DECIDE TO GO HOME IN THE AFTERNOON OR EVENING. THIS CAN BE A GOOD THING, BUT IT NEEDS THE RESPONSE OF BOTH ARTISTS AND PEOPLE.



If people have trouble relating to our centerfold this issue, as perhaps being frivolous or "not very important", we would like to say this. The reason we have printed this is to run in conjunction with National Bike Day and Bicycle Safety Week. And for ourselves. The message says simply that "Bicycles Have Equal Rights". But beyond that, we have a responsibility to ourselves, in that bicycles, as an alternative to automobiles, present us with several positive qualities. They provide us with good exercise, they don't contribute to air pollution, they take up less general space when not in use. So, if you haven't already, develop an awareness and an understanding of people who use them, and, perhaps, get into them yourself.



This issue is for Laura Levy, who is a fine lady...



I was hoping to write an editorial for this issue, but found it very hard. As a matter of policy, WOODWIND has not entered the field of politics, particularly the field of rhetorical politics, except when we felt that we should make some kind of statement, express some kind of opinion, show some kind of commitment. The events in Washington that have taken place during the last few weeks have left a serious change in a lot of people's attitudes, some for the better, some for the worse. It is now a time of seriousness, and commitment. In the next issue, if all goes well, we will have an editorial, or perhaps several editorials, as the case may be.



I. SATURDAY, April 24th, WASHINGTON MONUMENT GROUNDS. IN WHICH THE REPORTER TENACIOUSLY HANGS ON BACKSTAGE HOPING FOR A CLOSE-IN VIEW OF GRIN'S LAST LOCAL APPEARANCE FOR A LONG WHILE, MAYBE.

The object was Peace, they said, but backstage at the Sylvan Theater it was more like War-- a battalion of stoned freaks storming Hamburger Hill. Marshalls throwing kids offstage, security throwing kids offstage, marshalls carrying uncounscious bodies offstage, security throwing marshalls offstage, distraught parents searching for runaway children. Pete Seeger picked his way gently around Swamp Dog's mountain of equipment, looking a little bit dazed by the whole thing.

Meanwhile there were several dozen remaining on stage who had a "good reason" for being there, including three musicians whose good reason was that they were actually supposed to set up their equipment and play a set of music in the midst of all these marvels. Despite the fact that the mikes wouldn't work, the PA wouldn't work, the lights wouldn't work, and the crowd was fast breaking down. Or up. Or something. Why don't you just get out there and jam? suggested the management. Even if they can't hear you? Until these sound people manage to get it on, huh? How about it, guys?

"Grin? Who's Grin?" demands one hostile peacenik from New York who has just been thrown off the stage for the third time.

"I don't know," says his friend, infinitely world-weary. "After all this, they'll probably get out there and play a set of Archies."

"Grace under pressure" best describes Grin's contribution to peace as they just got out there and jammed, for about fifteen minutes--sounding pretty good, considering. Their style onstage is very controlled, none of your flashy, freakshow routines. (After all, urinating on amplifiers and smashing guitars onstage doesn't make for better music, it makes for smashed guitars and wet amplifiers, right?)

By the time they move into the hard-rocking beat of "Slippery Fingers", the New York critics have stopped making their snotty comments.

"They just put out an album," a loyal fan informs them coolly.

"They're going to New York next week for this big promotional show Columbia's throwing for them."

"oh, yeah?"

"Yeah. Then they're going back out to California to cut another album. Probably play a couple of big places out there, go on a national tour."

"The big hype, huh?" says World-Weary.

"They write all their own stuff. Nils Lofgren, that kid on lead guitar? He writes all their songs."

"Which one?"

If you're lucky, from that stageside angle, you can occasionally catch a glimpse of Lofgren from between a marshall's legs. Singing out raunchy lyrics into the feeble mike. Or bent over his guitar, really getting into it, slippin' all over you! Frazzed-out hair bathed purple by the sometimes working spots. Bob Berberich and Bob Gordon are giving it all they got, too, like it was Constitution Hall or something, complete with paying guests. Can't say they didn't try.

"He's always going around doing guest shots on other people's albums, too. Neil Young. Crazy Horse. Plays piano, guitar, you name it. And they're gonna get another guy, I heard. This guy Danny Whitten, used to be in Crazy Horse, he's joining Grin. Supposed to come in this weekend."

World-Weary raises his eyebrows.

"This is probably their last gig around here for a long time, man."

Grin winds up yet another great sound, "End Unkind", and the announcer calls out for a big hand, from all those folks who couldn't hear them. The boys do not linger fondly about the stage. They make for the parking lot, where more marshalls are holding back more fans trying to beat down the fence. What is it about peace festivals, anyway?

Eventually, their guitars, amplifiers, PA, equipment manager, selves and old ladies are loaded into the big white van with "Mrs. Smith's Pies--Delicious!" painted on the side. They pause to give passage to an "ambulance" bearing yet another fallen acid case, and finally trundle off through the trees. So long D. C. A hapless departure if ever there was one. It would be nice to see them return in glory, wouldn't it?

II. SUNDAY, April 25. MONROVIA, MARYLAND. IN WHICH THE REPORTER MEETS SOME VERY HAIRY DOGS AND PEOPLE DOWN ON THE FARM.

It's a very domestic scene, a long way in miles from the Monument Grounds, but an even longer way in spirit. A big white farmhouse, surrounded by hilly cornfields and neat red barns and split-rail fences. A good spot for retreating and getting it together, if you've got something to get together, which Grin do. The Columbia Press Party is Thursday, and Whitten has arrived from L. A. only the night before, which leaves about three days to get a good solid set together, including teaching Danny all the songs. Definitely an uptight situation, but is anybody panicking? Hell no. Everybody is out on the balcony, drinking Michelob. This is called "taking a break."

As I come onto the porch a large dog barks and snarls, trying his best to discourage me. He is Grin's press agent, I realize later. Courage?

IN SEARCH OF GRIN donia mills

Inside I meet more dogs, German sheperds and Irish setters and many puppies of indistinguishable breeds, in varying sizes. I wander about taking note of the incredible decor--snake skins, nude lady portraits, posters of Jimi Hendrix, Jesus Christ, Cream, and a hand-embroidered tapestry of puppies. In the center of everything sits a large electric hockey game.

Eventually I even stumble across a person, equipment manager Steve Jensen, who works quietly in the background seeing to it that the sound Grin makes is the sound you hear.

And in the practice room there is Bob Gordon, who plays a very driving bass and looks an awful lot better in person than in the album photo. We start out with some mundane questions about the group's early experiences. It seems he and Nils around 1968 were playing in Bethesda with a group called the Shot. Or was it Nils and Berberich playing around 1968 in Bethesda in a group called the Dolphins? Oh, dear. Nobody's too clear on dates. Nobody much cares. Anyway, it was 1969, maybe, when the winning combination of Bob, Bob and Nils formed Grin, to play to the standard run of teen clubs, rec centers, high school dances and even a few gigs at the "Bluesette" in Baltimore.

"We were just messing around," recalls Bereberich, who plays drums and sings lead in a delightfully guttural voice ("I'd hit ya in the mouth, but honey you know I'm lazy!") and looks an awful lot more visible in person than on the album photo. "We've never been heavy or political at all, we just play music for people to have a good time. We used to do a lot of those free GROK concerts down in D. C. When the Free Press used to throw parties down at St. Stephen's Church, everybody just freaking out and having fun."

Was there a turning point?

"Well, yeah, I guess you might call it that. When Nils met Neil Young here in town."

Nils played for Neil and Neil really dug it, and said why didn't the three of them come out to California? Which was a great coincidence, because they planned to go out there anyway, and now they had a friend to show them around. Who he mainly showed them to was David Briggs, a young producer who lived in Topanga Canyon and let them crash at his place while they were playing gigs at the nearby Corral. (This Canyon, one gathers, is to the L. A. music scene what the Watergate is to Republicans.) It was spring of 1970 when they recorded the album "Grin" with a little vocal help from their friends on some cuts--namely Neil Young and Crazy Horse.

Lofgren retains complete control of his own material by owning his own publishing company, Hillmer Music. "Spindizzy" is Grin's own label, produced by Briggs, distributed by Columbia.

Why did it take a year between the recording and the releasing? is a question which may have occurred to local Grin fans as D. C. papers kept pronouncing "any day now" for months. In retrospect, it's an amusing little tale, the sort of thing you sit around and laugh about later, in more prosperous days. Finding out somebody else already had dibs on "Thunder Records" by the time the labels got printed. Jetting back and forth to the West Coast for repeatedly unphotogenic photo sessions. The fall 1970 release of a single off the album, "We All Sung Together/See What a Love Can Do", which did not exactly tear up the Top 40 charts. And just the general red tape connected with being a subsidiary of a huge-but prestigious--outfit like Columbia.

And how about the recording, were there hassles with the recording?

"No," says a tall bearded stranger who seems to know what he is talking about. Bless me, it's David Briggs. (An eclectic sort of guy, to judge by his roster of other artists--Neil Young, Tom Rush, Spirit, Alice Cooper, Donovan.) "These guys are an incredibly together group, all individually good yet they complement each other well, no ego problems. I mean, they all like each other, which helps a lot."

But why Grin? I ask, not meaning to sound disrespectful. Out of all the hundreds of local groups all over the country cutting first albums with great expectations, what makes you so sure grin is going to take off and go all the way?

"They've got the music," he says simply. "A lot of people around can sing and play instruments, but it's the songs that usually make or break you in the end. Look at Dylan, the Stones, even Neil Young--they didn't make it on classically great voices, they made it on the music. Nils is a great writer, he's got amazing energy and versatility, and he's very well respected in the business. He writes material anybody could do. You watch-- within six months other people are going to be picking up his stuff."

(I admit it's an intriguing idea. Peggy Lee doing "Like Rain". The Band on "Outlaw". Englebert Humperdink with "Pioneer Mary" and on "We All Sung Together" the Norman Luboff Choir.)

"He's very young, and very talented," Briggs sums up. "The kid is nineteen years old. It's the Great American Hero Dream."

Granted, asking a producer about his latest pet artist is a little like asking a Jewish mother about her son. But there seem to be plenty of other musicians to support these claims, like Neil Young, who asked Nils to play piano on his highly-successful "After The Gold Rush" album. And Steve Stills, whose newest unreleased album includes Lofgren's guitar and vocal work. And piano and guitar for Greg Reeves. And of course the Crazy Horse album, to which he contributed "Beggar's Day" and "Nobody" along with his voice and guitar. Now there are others in the works.

Enough, enough.

Where does Danny Whitten fit into all this? He's tall, blond and easy-moving, and he's been called the "best emotion singer" and the "best rhythm guitarist" in the business, which isn't bad for openers. During another break I track him out to the balcony where he is plucking absently at an acoustic guitar rimmed with decals from Georgia, Jacksonville, Tennessee, Miami, North Carolina, Virginia.

A Southern Gentleman! Well, more or less. (Maybe the fact that he hasn't slept in three days has something to do with it.) He's originally from Columbus, Georgia, half-Cherokee and half Irish and English and Scottish and all that stuff. There was an early group called the Rockets, and a place called the Pink Pussycat. And, um, let's see. Much later, the Whiskey a Go-Go in L. A. That's where Neil Young heard his group playing, asked them to come over and jam with him sometime. Which they did, later joining him as Crazy Horse, cutting albums with him, accompanying him on three major tours.

I ask Danny about the good old days (?) with Neil and Crazy Horse, and his reasons for splitting. He opens his mouth: many tales flicker through those weary eyes; he closes his mouth--"I Don't Want To Talk About It" best summing up his feeling at the moment. A gentleman after all!

And a remarkable song-writer too, author not only of the strikingly beautiful title mentioned above, but also of such stompers as "Downtown" and "Dirty, Dirty" and more, all happily available on the Crazy Horse album.

His joining Grin means several significant things--like adding another fine guitar, and another fine voice, and another strong writer of original material. And with Nils equally proficient on guitar and keyboards, Grin can open up their sound in live performances with Nils on piano-organ while Danny holds down lead guitar, see?

Break time is over: all dogs and reporters who have wandered into the practice room are politely escorted out by Nils Lofgren. So I sit outside the door, listening to the interesting sounds of musicians putting music together. Everybody's gotta hear everybody else. Let's quiet down the second verse. Think we should do that one acoustically? Maybe you should rent a really good PA when you get up there. Hey wait a minute, our PA is loud as shit, man. (Grin's PA has stood by them, by God, and Grin's going to stand by their PA!)

Waiting for the next break, I begin to despair of ever pinning down the curious, frazzle-headed, unshaven creature who is the key to this whole ball game and has been steadily eluding me all afternoon. If you can read a man in his music (and if not there, where else?) then you're really faced with a bewildering portrait. Even leaving aside his latest compositions, the album cuts (all written at age eighteen or younger) present a body of music that is at the same time quiet and tender ("Take You To The Movies Tonight"), loud and rough ("I Had Too Much"), young and idealistic ("We All Sung Together", "If I Were A Song"), country-wholesome and ragtimey ("Everybody's Missing the Sun"), wistful and complex ("Like Rain", "Pioneer Mary") and downright erotic ("Open Wide", "Direction"). What is it with him, anyway?

The door opens, the hairy ones straggle out.

"Okay, why don't you ask me one quick question, right now?" Nils throws back over his shoulder en route from one room to another.

By the time I phrase the question he is already out back, perched on a porch rail, strumming thru "If I Were A Song" for Danny, which sounds great, even on a strum-thru. Briggs sits by tapping his foot with the satisfied smile of a man who has just invested in some very promising stocks. The sun is rapidly going down beyond the neighbor's barn and it's a long drive home.

I bid them farewell, lamenting all the unasked questions. Do friendly people make you shy? Do you meet the kind of friends that always end? Do you come terrified at these discussions?

If this was a paying job, I decide, I'd probably get fired.



DANNY WHITTEN

III. MONDAY, April 26. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY. IN WHICH THE REPORTER GOES TO A ROY BUCHANAN CONCERT AND EFFECTS A FORTUNATE REUNION WITH SOME OLD FRIENDS IN THE FRONT ROW.

From both the look and the sound of things in Gaston Hall Auditorium, we could've all suddenly died and gone to heaven: holy crests, saints and crosses everywhere, gilt carvings, velvet draperies behind medieval arches. On the wall above the stage, the blessed virgin holds up a book inscribed simply with "Alpha and Omega"--which pretty well sums it up.

A cheer of anticipation bursts forth as Buchanan strolls onstage with a cigarette and a Schlitz and that bemused, deep-eyed Mona Lisa smile that makes you wonder what, if anything, he's thinking as he plays.

And then there are the sidemen: funky, rocking little Joe Bayliss on organ and Don Monahan on bass, both from the Crossroads Tavern in Bladensburg where Roy Buchanan plays nightly except Mondays. (The big fellow named Tiny who used to play bass? He quit the band just recently to become a preacher.) And then we have here Bing McCoy from Sageworth and Drums, on piano, and on drums--can it be? Our very own Tom Zito, in a Mickey Mouse tee shirt? Come on.

Well now look, demand certain critics. If he's the greatest rock guitarist in the world, why isn't he famous? Why doesn't he play with famous people? Why doesn't he do Carnegie Hall, why isn't he rich?

Truly, not since the days of Herod and Satan hassling Jesus has a thirty year old guy been so shouted at to get the lead out and make something of himself, but Buchanan is going to walk on water when and where he pleases. (The Rolling Stones reportedly asked Buchanan to join them in Brian Jones' place and Roy says no thanks. But Tim Framcis and Larry Rohrer, a couple of admiring students, ask him to play a couple of shows for the Georgetown Food Coop at a buck-fifty a head, and Roy says oh well why not? Obviously, there are levels of the sublime that reach beyond mere expertise.)

I mean, it's the Concert on the Mount, folks, and if you don't believe it just ask anybody who was there.

Ask Nils Lofgren, for instance, who is planted firmly in the front row, waxing so enthusiastic that he has indeed become as a little child. He is the only person in the audience with the distinction of having written a whole album full of songs and recorded them and dedicated them to Roy Buchanan. (Roy probably doesn't even know about it yet. It doesn't even matter, really.)

"I dedicated it to him because I didn't want anybody to think I was trying to copy his technique without giving him credit, you know what I mean? He's the greatest guitarist in the world, he can play a song the way I can only think it. If I could really play out of my self like that, just the way I feel it, that's how it would come out."

Wow. Straight answers at last, and lots of them.

"I have a thousand different moods, I write the way I feel at the moment. And the music comes first, usually. I carry around a bunch of tunes in my head and put lyrics with them as they come to me. Because you know, a certain set of words can only mean one thing, but a tune can fit a lot of different lyrics."

I ask him about "Outlaw", which intrigues me.

"Those lyrics are a little hard to understand, I made it that way on purpose. I was trying to get that feeling of helplessness the blind boy has when the outlaw tells him son, stand in the corner, if I kill your sister that's too bad. I just had to imagine myself in his place, to get down that feeling. Yeah, I like that song."

And?

"Well, 'Like Rain'. I guess because it means a lot to me personally, it came from something that really happened."

(Yes. Somehow you can tell.)

Over to one side, a tall good-looking black chick confers with her friend and finally comes up to Nils shyly.

"Hey, I just bought your album," she says.

"Did you? Great. Do you like it?"

"Yeah, I sure do!" She smiles and sidles on away, whispering with her friend. He's a character right out of Oliver Twist, he is, just like he comes across onstage. Five foot three, not counting hair and hat, ("Pretty short, huh?"), bundled up in all kinds of shirts, one on top of another, with a gnarled braid tied knotted around his neck like a talisman.

I inquire gently about the condition of one intermediate-level shirt, whose green plaid faded flannel sleeves are ripped from cuff to shoulder and flapping around his elbows. If the album sales go well, I wonder, does he think maybe he could afford a new one?

"No, no," he says with sudden concern. "This is a good shirt, I've had this shirt for a long time. I like plaids."

He also likes his family, which becomes immediately evident when Mr. Lofgren arrives with his three younger sons and they all settle into the down-front seats that Nils has taken great pains to save for them. It's remarkable, the warmth and affection bouncing from Lofgren to Lofgren almost visibly. The other boys play instruments also, I am proudly informed, and Nils himself started out on accordion when he was six.

"But he was always interested in a lot of other things, too," Mr. Lofgren adds. "For a while he wanted to be a professional football player, but that didn't quite work out."

While Roy Buchanan is actually playing, one doesn't exactly stand around chattering to Nils Lofgren. Or to anybody else, for that matter. From the first blasted chord of "SHOTGUN!" the crowd has been shrieking and groaning in one extended orgasm of disbelief that the guy up there in brown slacks, striped shirt and hush puppies is really for real.

"All the teenyboppers done had their say," Roy tells the mike in a heavy blues number, "Now I think I'm gonna try it my way." Oh, yessss! Photographers line up in front of the stage, snapping pictures as if that's going to prove what's going down here tonight. Forget it! Polydor Records has also sent people, to get the event down on tape, but how can you possibly get such an event on tape?

Now he's playing with his left hand only, wandering over there to blow his nose, drink some beer, smoke a cigarette with his right. The audience goes berserk. Standing ovations in the middle of songs. On "Malaguena" he sounds like a whole orchestra. Times Square on New Years Eve. Now a violin, some radar bleeps, the Battle Hymn of the Republic--and back into "Malaguena". Now tatch the right hand--he's turning knobs with the little finger while he picks with his thumb and forefinger and plucks with the other two. (No one would dream of storming the stage because it would be sacrilegious.) From "Tales of Brave Ulysses" to "Don't Bogart That Joint", from "Whiter Shade of Pale" to "Johnny B. Good"--and the haunting four-note theme of "Roy's Blues", music for the publicans and sinners.

David Briggs has been sitting there all this time watching with a very covetous look in his eyes. David, thou shalt not covet Roy Buchanan.

"Listen, we've been working on him for a year, trying to get him to join Grin. And we haven't given up yet."

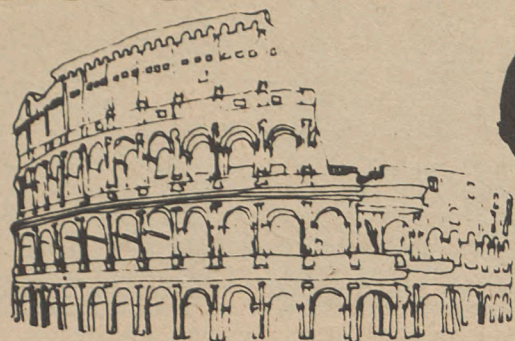
Wait a minute, what's that again? Grin, with Roy Buchanan on lead guitar? (Nils on keyboards, Danny on rhythm guitar, Bob on--no, no, this is too much. The imagination breaks down.)

It's well after midnight, and like it or not, the stomping, screaming multitude has to be content with one last encore. And the reporter has to be content with one last question.

"What makes us happiest? Performing, definitely. Doing live shows for live people. We love audiences that are alert and jumping, really ready to have a good time. Recording is OK too, but that's more like hard work, and you don't have that feedback from the audience letting you know you are doing all right, right on the spot. We'd like to be able to make great music for a crowd of fifty thousand people and keep everyone of them happy every single minute."

There were only about eight hundred that fit this description Monday night, straggling out of Gaston Hall still shaking their heads. Is there some underlying irony here? Roy Buchanan departing for Bladensburg with his wife and children to return on Tuesday to the Crossroads Tavern. Nils Lofgren departing for Monrovia with his producer, to go forth on Thursday to New York and beyond, to the world his idol apparently wants no part of. That legendary pressure-cooker world of motels and groupies and big limousines, maybe even crowds of fifty thousand, hopefully all the way. Except is that really all the way? After tonight's epiphany, one isn't so sure any more.

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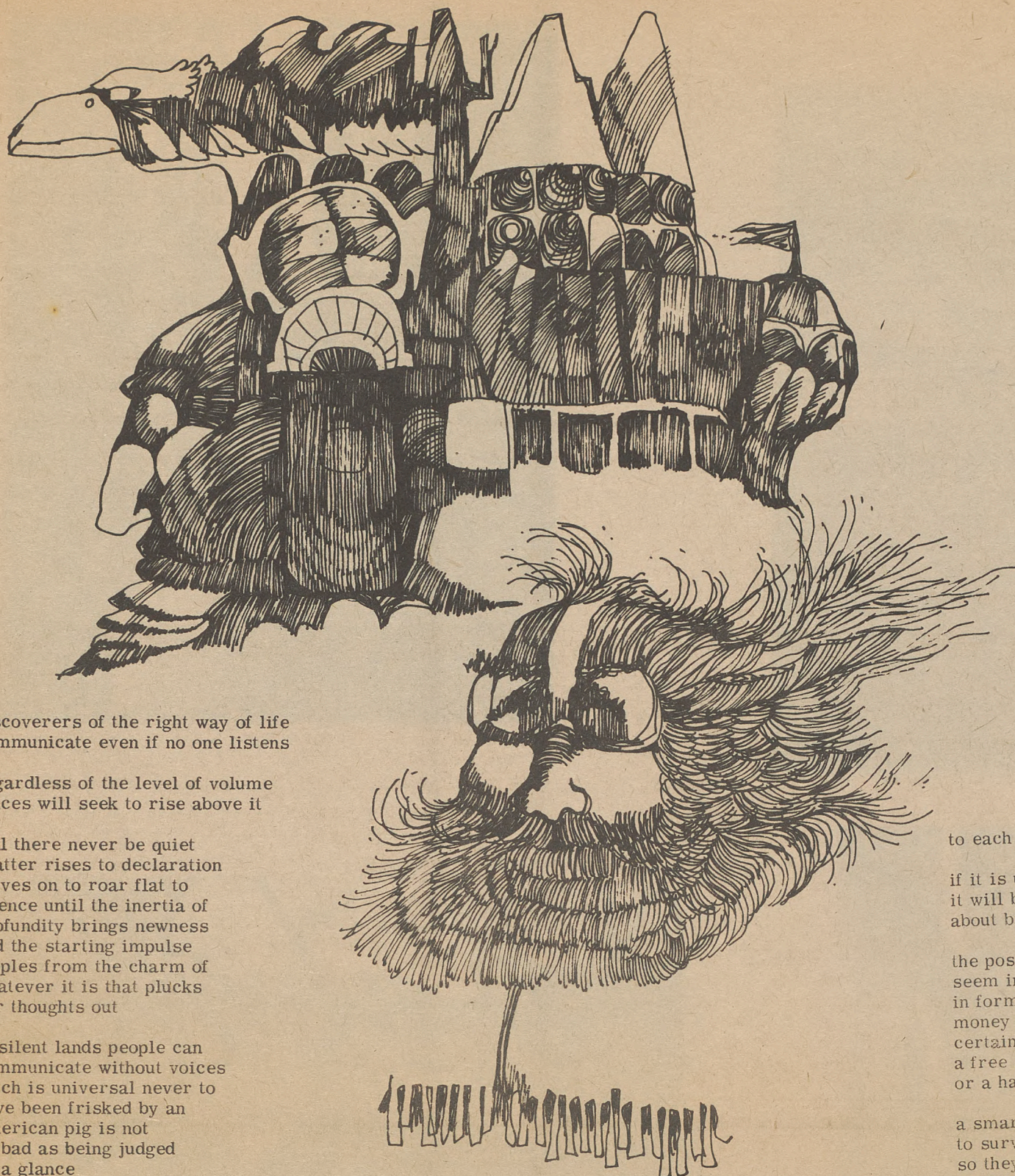


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can pass between differences only after

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holds areas of occupation gracefully, as if
inherited from relatives who earned it all
with hard work and passed proper control
of that hugeness

planning alternatives planning
furthering tribes' deep desires
painfully culminating naked need
forever thoughtlessly forever
wordfull like gross malfeasance
tooth to pull teeth to smile
mouth for chewing
fat hair or thin smiles
to ribbons of bitterness
for soaking in tea
for throwing to bird's peace
for asking deepness nothing
for now one

dir tin sitt y eets

fir stew guise
rion gies
ailrode sties

frontier grows best wild men
chottle heads root gland
wrench mun nindionize
has you

blastergame preegnitzes
off rips kiddies

grass eeze

Glass sees. Merridge uhwan. Meri ju an na.

Mehr e djuwan a. Merry do want a. Merry do you?
Moke whiffy. Soke marithong. Doke fawn ah.
Glatch.

Dies at a party. Holder shoots a due to me.
I accept. We go out to the car where Carry is.
Me in the back seat a toke they pass free.
Do I the deed, needing surely deep I trap the
most smoke possible and dip to bottom of powers
like well practiced hyperventilator

Dies at a party. Holder shoots a due to me.
I accept. We go out to the car where Carry is.
Me in the back see a toke they pass free
Di I the deed, needing surely deep I trap the
most smoke possible and dip to bottom of powers
like well practiced hyperventilator.

I die. Another he takes over, and becomes a
mess. Eyes blear. Nearly if you ever see an
eye from easy to see.
We ride a long way. The experience of death
orgasmizes me in the nearest way I can
daid it. Overme ripples of ripping free.
Good tea. Boss weed. Chicano stuff up from
meublow. Almost giggles me but for their hassles.

the curling edge of tomorrow
frightens me
the true tellers of our future
are living in a stubborn past
that loves war

generals should be firmly
tied to rituals of death
the killing should start
at the top with rules such
that privates always die last
it seems simple to me
that they who are into killing
should be led to each other
gently and with much reverence
all men can be and are death
and life gods why not

i read age in my skin map
moles pass hair as slowly
the truth of the hard future
breaks

to each

if it is understood that our own is everything
it will be easier to see that there is no question
about brother keeping

the possibilities of technology
seem infinite inside a certain dialect
in forms of other truth categories
money eats or behind you a
certain dog creeps quietly
a free economy can be a good slave
or a hard slaver for many

a smart machine has to look human
to survive yeas and please
so they sent this fucking
good looking computer to ask me
why i hadn't paid my parking
ticket it cam right in
and hassled me for a long time
but finally ran out of juice
and had to beg for the use
of my outlet and now wants
to bust me for offering bribe

nuddy chick in forwarding asked
me down for a drink and i
thought she meant something else
bragged about causing all four
of her psychiatrist's suicides
simultaneously and had a fifth

arrested trying to off her

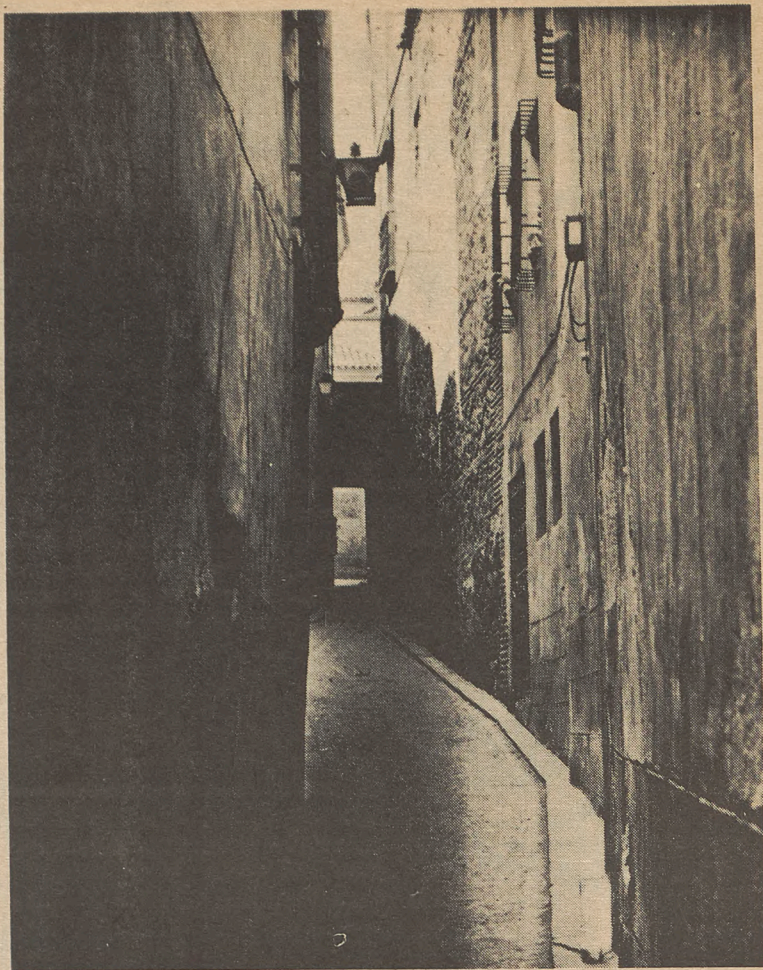
Peter Caruso

how about your neighbors and friends

it might be better if you did not look
for anything between these lines
the girl stood clutching her shift
at first would seem to simply mean

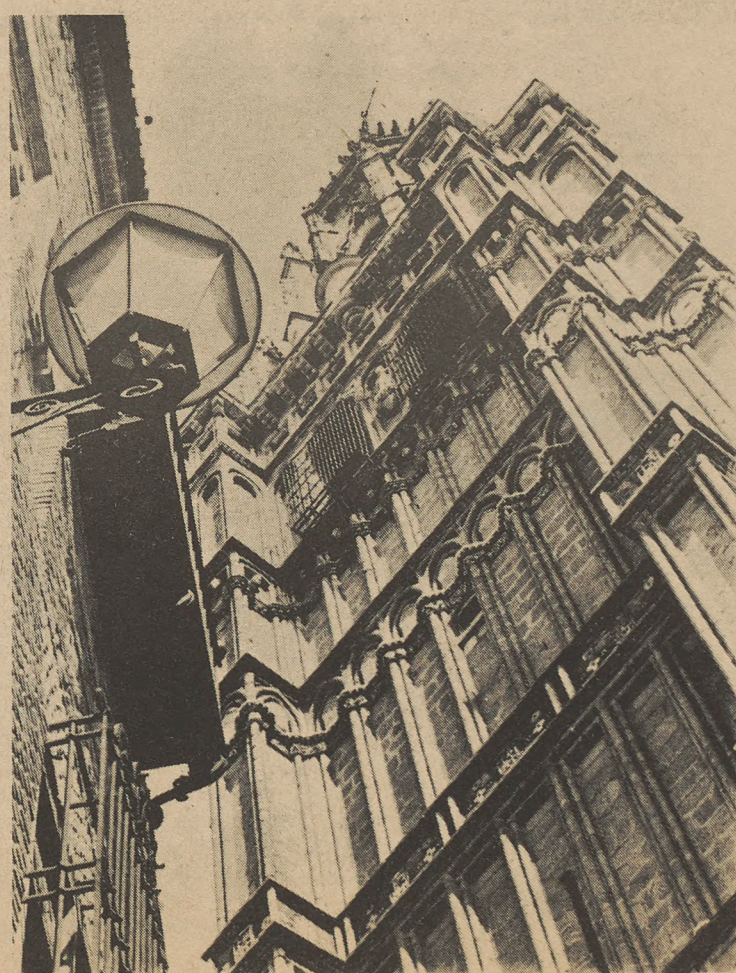
a ragged thing perhaps frightened

there are rules without which chaos
would have the upper hand





**EDUARDO
GALDON**



Concerts

JAMAIS VU

"Well now, something should be different. They just aren't yet." Someday, by the grace of God and Rolling Stone, it will be possible to write about POCO without a preface about "rising from the ashes of the now legendary Buffalo Springfield." They were still pickin' up the pieces at Painter's Mill on Wednesday April 28th and unlike C, S, N & Y (who are as often out of tune as they are in), Poco are still overlooked by the people they serve. Like "the girl next door" their music is a precious gift hidden in plain sight.

It was that kind of cool, drizzling night best suited for a long walk in the rain and the weariness of feeling alone. People arrived early in anticipation of a worthwhile time. Poco, along with the very mellow Manhattan Transfer, and a promising unfinished local set by the name of Aux, have always paid their dues in constant touring and many freebies. Richie Furay, the one member left of the Springfield, had once said that Poco was a machine (perhaps a '57 Chevy?) that needed to perform constantly to run happy. The fact is that it's often months between short visits home. Both Richie and Tim Schmidt have a good reason to miss home... named Timothy Suzanne and Jedra, both born early last September.

Since losing their lead guitarist Jim Messina to stifled ambition and grueling work, they have kept up as many as six nights a week on stage with thousands of paved miles in between. It showed on their faces before the show.

No shyness on the stage, however; somehow each has grown accustomed to half-filled shows and they're proud to please everybody who comes. Perhaps grateful is the word for the wide-eyed high spirits that the band generates. That night the energy level began as low as I could remember it had been when it became apparent Jim Messina was dissatisfied and wanted to leave. His replacement, Paul Cotton (formerly of the Illinois Speed Press) now leads the group on stage. A bit louder, not devoted to precision, Cotton gives Poco a freedom to experiment in performance. After a listless opening, his song "Railroad" gave the audience the adrenalin needed to absorb their rapidly expanding acoustic set. Another highlight new in the set is Richie Furay's first lead break in another Cotton song, "Bad Weather". Here was stronger harmony than ever before, the aching weariness of the night and the travelling purged by the hard precision of "Railroad", the autobiographical "Pickin' Up the Pieces", the bittersweet "Child's Claim To Fame."

Yes, they have changed. I was there when "Deliverin'" (Epic KE 30209) tore up Boston's Music Hall- the rigid, awesome exactness of their live work is gone, for the present; its power remains. Diminished? Yes, they are tired-- the hysteria so reminiscent of the earliest Beatles still grows. The crowd sporadically called for Poco from the moment Aux came out. Perhaps we were all searching for the Real Thing, the mirror of our pent-up energy and to the frustrations of a group that deserves so much more to be heard and enjoyed. There was a missionary zeal present, a feeling divorced from the empty rooms of the Quality Courts of America and the humdrum boredom of constant driving. That moment, midway in the set, freed everybody for the night.

Poco. Is it possible the pieces are picking at them? There is a point where joy and honesty separate the makers from their moment, where the forthright becomes invisible. The French have a word for it - "jamais vu". Tim Schmidt wrote a beautiful song about it, entitled "From The Inside". As yet unperformed, it's the title cut of the next album, due out in July. When Poco next come, do yourself a favor and grow with them.

Sunday, May 2nd, was a big day for Painter's Mill and Tree Frog Productions. Calico, one of Baltimore's local bands, began with one of the most promising sets done by a local band since J. Geils left Poston. Fred Tepper, lead guitarist, performed a brilliant arrangement of an old Irish jig, "Wild Rose", reminiscent of Fairport Convention. With the addition of a fourth member, they may become more than a rising star from Baltimore.

J. Geils is one band that has grown from unknown to near legend in a few months: a good example of their reputation is the fact that Bill Graham has booked them to close the Fillmore East in June. Old bluesmen like John Lee Hooker have praised their versions of standards, like "Serve You Right to Suffer", as definitive. A fine show band, the Geils walked through a murky sound system with their own fast-paced brand of rhythm and blues, highlighted by an old tune by Juke Joint Jimmy called "Cruisin' for Love". Ballsy. There's a certain sincerity about a band that maintains that rock'n roll never died, and Wolf, their lead singer and former DJ on the graveyard shift of Boston's WBCN-FM, exemplifies the bohemian side of the blues in a way only comparable to Paul Jones of Manfred Mann or as Bill Graham maintains, the earliest Stones.

A far different style was produced by Emerson, Lake and Palmer, a trio of exacting musicians whose training in classical and jazz structures produce an eclecticism rare even for other keyboard groups. Keith Emerson, former pianist/organist/clavinetist etc. for the Nice, far outshadowed the competent work of bassist/guitarist/vocalist Greg Lake (late of King Crimson) and the superb brushwork of Carl Palmer (formerly with Atomic Rooster, among other things.) Little can be said of the calibre of E, L & P's material save that it derives heavily from such diverse sources as Gershwin, Mahler, Appalachian hoe-down, the Beatles, Tchaikovsky, Jerry Lee Lewis and a most interesting fantasia built around Dave Brubeck's "Take Five". The schizoid flavor of King Crimson remains intact in the lyrics- ditties about tanks, madmen and a symphony for armadillo. The mood of the evening lay in Emerson's show-dropping organs, feedback, brilliant fugue and the highest technical counterpoint yet to grace rock music, bar none. Borrowing from John Cage, composer of "4 Minutes" and other surreal moments in music (he first originated "the happening"), the evening progressed along the fine line that must separate carny shows and savage, mythic ritual theatre. As a finale, he sacrificed the Organ knives and feedback, leaving a dazed audience to go home in the driving rain.

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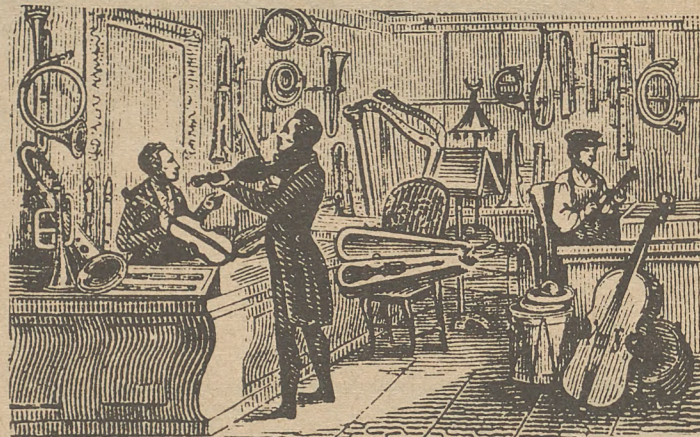
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Startled again
a man's irises turn from sunrise,
closing in their casual function
to adjust
like lovers rippled by a flashlight.

From ripples to new light
we arrived, startled
at birth, our eyes adjusting
our cries
to keep back the day.

Always rustled out
without our belongings,
always as sure of ourselves
as our eyes are of light and dark
that we can find a new homestead
where for a time
we can let our blood pulse slow.

Our arteries are warnings, our hear
alarms we do not hear
until we are shaken.
Our ears are on the wrong speed.

Attuned only to barked orders,
we move along, scouting for a new
we cut down the woods,
we cordon the fields with our cries.

Adjusting
yard by year by hour by mile
we are so surprises
each time,
to have walked out a path,
to then turn and see
all it was
in which we have taken place,

so surprised
each time a ring closes.
And grateful for our hazy signs,

we look in a tree we have cut down.
It rings every four seasons,
enclosing its time with a seal.
The years have formed these eyes,
opening and closing,
rippling outward the warning

We are so surprised at the years.
We are so surprised at the grain of wood.
Our ears are on the wrong speed.

Startled again
a man's irises turn from sunrise,
closing in their casual function
to adjust
making rings.



ON THE WHITE OPEN SPACES

the Lone Ranger rides off.
No one steps forward to unmask him for us.

We used to be given to know his name
way before those folks in the show
asked and were told in the last ten seconds,
but now no one steps forward.

What do we have to go on, then?
Some silver bullets to puzzle over;
the sound of fading hooves
soon to tarnish:

As the day is long.
Like greased lightning.
Straight as an arrow.
Tall in the saddle.
We try and name him
in the space allowed.

William Holland

LOOK OUT

Look out.
Outside the windows
nothing can be believed.
Before the time of windows,
there were spaces in the walls
to look through,
and nothing was believed outside.
Before the time of spaces in the walls,
there were the cave openings,
and nothing outside the caves
was to be believed.

And yet there is always something
to be recognized there, something
we recognize, belonging to some part of ourselves

what was it ?
something that fit the hand

meeting outside, we squint to conjure up
the whispered curve, fleeting line,
belonging to us, death, death ?
which cannot be believed inside.

Death. We can say it. Death ? Say it.
It cannot be believed.

ONE PAGE NOTES MUST SUFFICE

There is too much to be covered
to have any more space.
There is no time
for extra spaces on the forms,

for this wandering of the blood
from story into story,
listening, nodding,
weaving itself into a tapestry
too dense to unravel
with any sense of efficiency

in the time allowed,
in the space allotted.

There is too much to be covered
to say what is not asked nor said.
There no longer is time
to go on about what struck whom like what. Yet,

**William
Holland**

THE NUMBER ONE SOUL STATION

Maybe 10,000 people or so
are tuned to the number one soul station.
Some have the music roaring
in their shiny cars tonight.
Near some schoolbooks
some are listening to whispered heresies
from a radio as small as a book.
And maybe it's blaring through the kitchen hiss
of some all night restaurants.

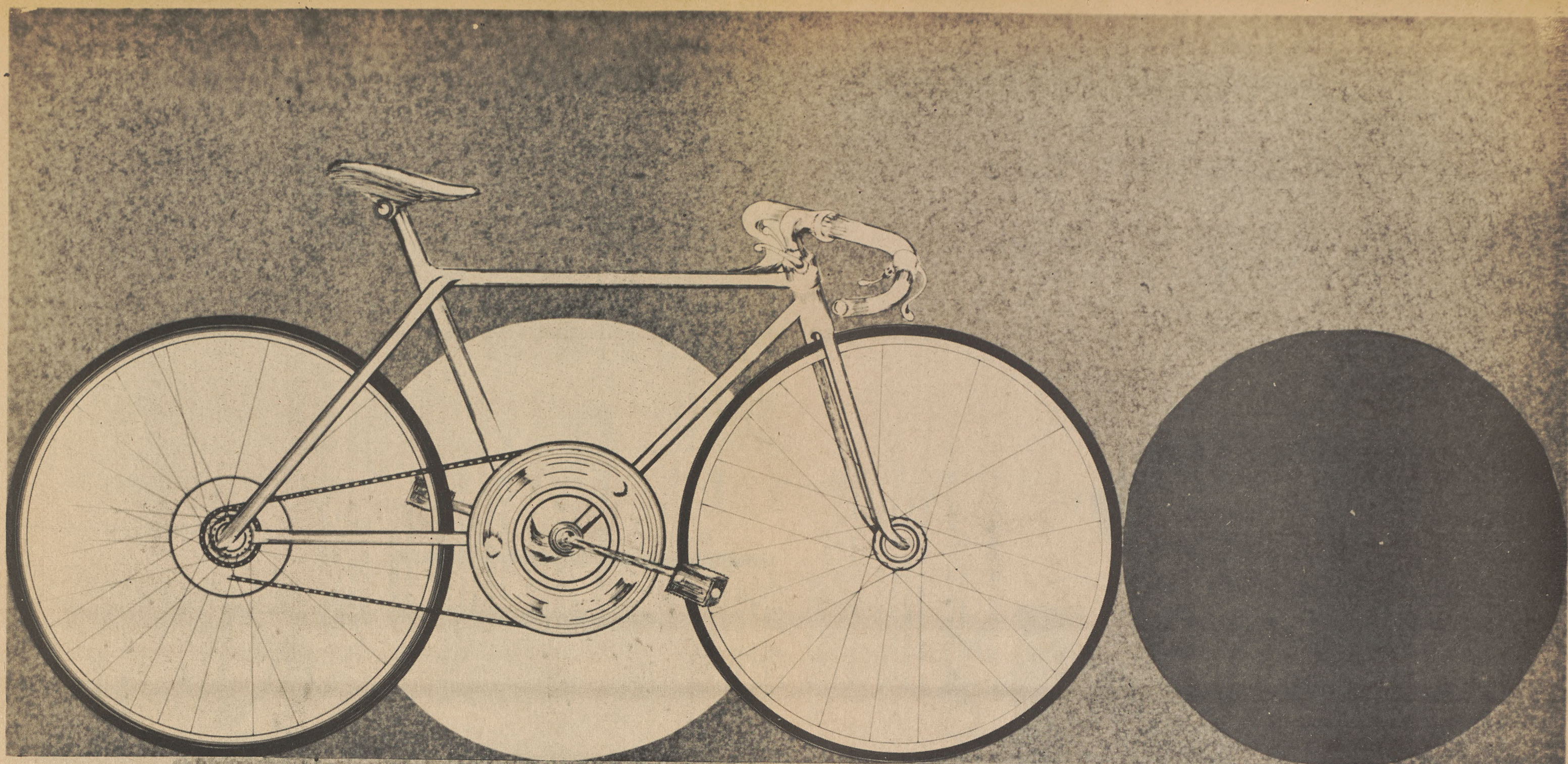
Some are probably crying as they sing
the words tonight
along with the number one soul station,
and maybe a few are balling to the tunes.
And probably some are just listening here and there,
wanting some time that they can remember
like in all the songs.

LATER, AT THE TYPEWRITER:

My mind could not speak the words;
it was too full of you
and stunned. Fwummpf!
A sponge off the counter into deep water.

THE THREAD

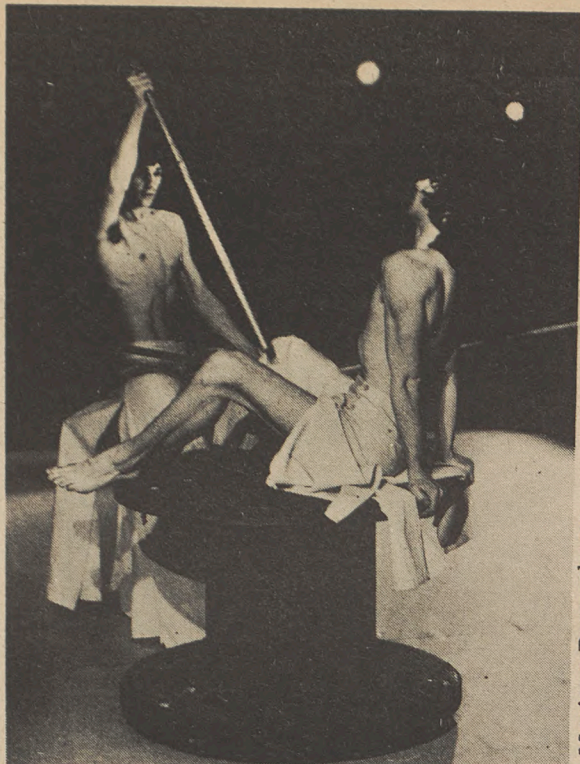
My nods thread your words,
asking you why
you must say these things
I already know to be here.



BIKES HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS

Theatre Laboratoire
Vicinal of Brussels
At Stage One . A Review

by Ned Chaillet



Monique Dannenberg

When Jerry Grotowski brought his Polish Laboratory Theatre to the United States in the fall of 1969 it was to the New York theatre season what the visit of the Living Theatre had been the year before, a rallying point for forces of the new theatre and an enemy and aggravation to the entrenched theatre establishment. The challenge was clear; a "Poor" theatre, with few props and no fancy costuming or elaborate lighting, with only the expressive medium of an actor's body and voice, could bring audiences banging on the theatre doors screaming to be admitted while million dollar extravaganzas continued to fold after one performance.

Grotowski's theatre, even more than the revolutionary Living Theatre, challenged the profit-seeking merchandising orientation of the American Theatre. Here was something successful, incredibly successful on an experiential level, that couldn't be bought, re-packaged, and moved from a loft on the Lower East Side to Broadway. (Although that's because the orientation is Broadway. I wouldn't bet that some enterprising young capitalist doesn't form a lab theatre and make a fortune selling it as the new "in" therapy.)

Grotowski refused to admit more than one hundred people to any of the theatre's performances, which, at that, was more than twice as many as he admitted to performances in the theatre laboratory in Wroclaw, Poland. Tickets, which nominally cost \$10 a person, were impossible for most people to get and when a rare scalped ticket became available it could be sold for as much as \$100.

The experience the Polish Lab Theatre provided its audiences was unavailable then, in any of the experimental American Theatres. Grotowski's message had been received in New York and several of the ensemble companies then performing, including the Open Theatre and the Performance Group, had incorporated techniques and training from the Lab Theatre into their work, but there was no true Poor Theatre in the Grotowski sense. The only true Grotowski-style lab theatre outside Poland that had achieved any success was the Odin Teatret established by Eugenio Barba, a disciple of Grotowski's, at Holstebro, Denmark.

Barba's theatre, and Grotowski-inspired theatres; all had one tradition of the Poor Theatre in common, they were director's theatres; theatres where the vision of the director dominated and gave form to the theatre pieces presented. Although there were always elements of collaboration between actor and director, playwright and director, designer and director, the finished piece was inevitably the vision as assembled by the director. It was ironic that this should be the case, because the function of the Poor Theatre has been to develop a Holy Actor who could serve as a spiritual guide for the spectator to an internal vision of revelation.

While the Polish Lab Theatre was flabbergasting New York, a playwright and four actors were busy forming a lab theatre in Belgium without the guiding hand of a single director. While the playwright, Frederic Baal explored the task of writing laboratory theatre, the actors were busy in training with Franz Marijnen, a Grotowski disciple.

Last week that theatre, the Theatre Laboratoire Vicinal of Brussels, gave a week of performances at Stage One in Georgetown. Although the elements of the Vicinal are the elements of the Grotowski Poor Theatre, a stripped down theatre using minimal theatrical aids beyond the body, it differs enormously in a metaphysical aspect because it lacks a director.

What therefore becomes important in the work of the Vicinal is the function of the playwright and his relationship with the actor-directors.

The piece performed by the Vicinal in Washington, *Real Reel*, is the second production of the theatre. It was "written" by Baal, who designated the words and gestures to the two actors, Jean-Pol Ferbus and Frederic Flamand, who were then charged with enacting the words and gestures and the spirit of the words and gestures and presenting the completed work to an audience. In this way, through the realization of Baal's written words, the actors become the directors as they choreograph their own actions in the performance environment, creating a theatre of signs.

Real Reel is performed by the two actors in a limited universe consisting of the performance room, the audience, a few fixed light sources, a reel (of the type used for electric cables), three metal pipes, a metal ring with two pieces of rope tied to it, two elbow shaped pieces of tubing (large enough to cover the actors' heads) and a hard white ball (apparently a billiard ball). With these materials the actors create horses, a woman, a sea bottom, a bull fight and enact erotic parodies, a mystic search and several other scenes with no relation to preceding scenes except the original materials which transform themselves many times over.

Progressing from scene to scene like a dream, the action begins sometime before the audience enters and finds the two performers prone on the floor with their heads inside the bent tubing. As the performers begin to move they enact a ritual defilement of a marchioness, who, after they crown and insult her, they recognize as a mere pipe. From that point they move through a discussion of cities and a fight to the death to an undersea voyage, to a search for "the spirit of the ancient hermitage", through a transformation into fowl and another death to an auction of the actors, to a torture, to an extraordinary binding together of the two actors as they shuffle away in circles breathing painfully.

The performance is then over.

The audience is left with the memory of an experience. Nothing has been revealed, no information has been offered. There has been no "history" provided. Yet something has been communicated.

Baal has refrained from telling a story with his words and designated actions because, as the theatre program indicates, "There is no story to tell because there is no history or destiny of the world." The play *Real Reel* has occurred to him piece by piece in random order and has been assembled in its presented form with the collaboration of the actors. The actors, for their part, have attempted to abandon their "specific identities" and tap their energy (and movement) from a "more universal non-individualized source".

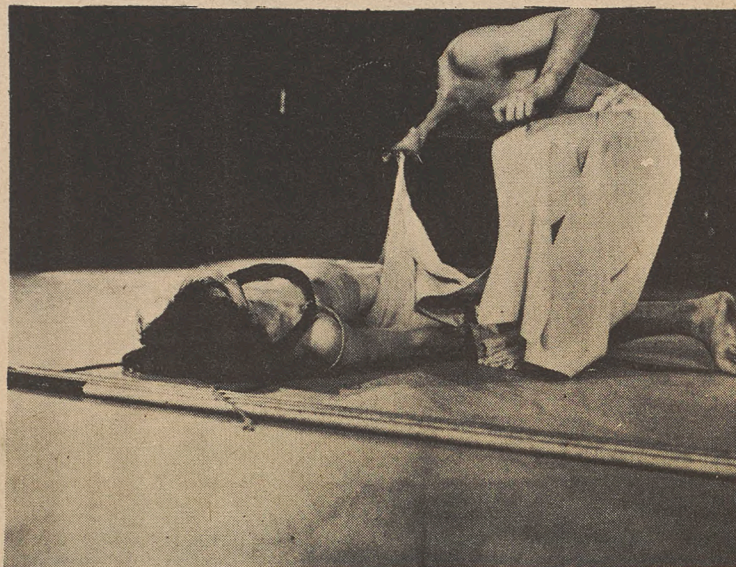
Baal's theatre, apparently like Artaud's vision of theatre, is to be a theatre of signs that "signals through flames" to the spectators. But, somewhat differently than Artaud, Baal feels that to set out to communicate anything specific is wrong. The theatre of signs that Baal seeks is to be a theatre without given politics or pre-conceived concepts which would become "piece(s) of information disguised as art." Rather, it will be a theatre that seeks in the realm of "trance, madness, 'etats seconds'" for "flashes" and "outbursts" which will "discover" or "invent us".

In relation to other laboratory theatres, the Vicinal is an extraordinary maverick. Instead of a director's theatre, we have a theatre founded by playwrights and actors. The performance materials are the materials that Grotowski uses, specifically the life-experiences of the actors, but in this playwright's theatre we lack the forms of the playwright which abound in the theatres of Grotowski and Barba. Myth has been abandoned because the playwright prefers to look to "an exploration of the unknown that opens up onto the infinite" which happens to be something which cannot be written but must occur in performance.

History has been abandoned for the same reason.

Reasoned dramatic progression has also been abandoned and the choice of scenes anarchistically attacks the very possibility of growth in the piece, so there is no actual "play" form to the piece except that there is a beginning of action and an end of action.

Yet, as I said, something has been communicated to the spectators. At first I thought it was the essence of the performers themselves, though we learned nothing of the histories of their lives, and I questioned Baal about that, particularly because he emphatically stated that this particular piece of theatre couldn't be created without these two actors. He denied it, pointing out that any action in the piece could be performed by either performer and that further, there was no division of roles by names, but only by the letters A and B.



Monique Dannenberg

It's true that there was no delineation between the two performers in functions in the play, but the fact that they were two different people and were so acknowledged by the appellation of the letters A and B indicated that a relationship between the two must exist. Since that is the case, and on my second viewing, I believe that the essence of the relationship between the two performers is the part of the performance that was accessible to the audience, and it was made accessible by the performers' direction. What was performed, then, was the relationship of the actors to each other in that environment with a particular set of tasks to perform.

If that is the case, it seems entirely possible that laboratory theatre can dispense with both the director and the playwright, and that, as Grotowski maintains, all that is necessary to the theatre is performer and the spectator.

Grotowski's highly developed literary taste may have prevented the Polish Lab Theatre, magnificent as it is, from freeing the actor to realize his possibilities. And playwright Baal's vision of a new playwright's role for the new theatre, may have come so near to harmony with Grotowski's ideas that he has nearly abolished the playwright altogether.

In defense of the playwright's role, Baal describes the need for the proper word, sound or silence to accompany a gesture. And he maintains that a playwright should conceive this.

Yet the play was in French, except for a few English words and phrases, and I could understand only an occasional word, which a properly trained actor could have ad-libbed. Despite that, the actors managed to communicate their relationship.

I could understand no Polish when I saw Grotowski's theatre, rich with language from T. S. Eliot and Dostoevsky, yet I could understand the functions and essential feelings of the Polish actors (as well as the vague direction of the action).

Baal says Grotowski's actors couldn't have performed *Real Reel* and he's correct.

Because the piece is about the relationship between two inventive and disciplined actors, Jean-Pol Gerbus and Frederic Flamand, and for the truth of that to come out they must perform it.

There are obvious limits, or handicaps, to this form of theatre, and they are the limits of the performer. If there is no tragedy accessible to the actor, then it will be difficult for the spectator to sense and comprehend any tragedy; something else will probably be performed. Unless, possibly, there is a history or story for the actor to perform.

The question of story in the laboratory theatre is probably the question that will determine the playwright's role.

Baal drew an analogy for me, through the translation of the Vicinal manager, Robert Schotte, that was something like this: "If you tell a poet to take the story out of a poem and he does, and still writes; then what has he written?"

The answer is obviously poetry, much of the time.

But suppose you tell a playwright to take the story out of theatre and he still writes? Then what has he written?

Theatre?

FATHER'S DAY at Washington Theater Club

The controversy surrounding Oliver Hailey's FATHER'S DAY, currently at the Washington Theater Club is curious. Panned by Clive Barnes of the NY Times, it closed in New York after two performances. Other reviewers praised it and Time magazine hailed it as the best play of the year.

The story of three Manhattan divorcees "celebrating" their independence on Father's Day and waiting the arrival of their estranged husbands for drinks, is a witty, thoroughly entertaining, and occasionally moving piece of theatre. It is drawing room comedy in the best sense. Because Hailey recognizes the limits of his talent in dealing with the situation he has set himself, he never succumbs to the mawkish sentimentality characterizing the structurally similar work of such playwrights as Zindel and Gilroy. What he has succeeded in doing is to portray three lonely women coming to terms with their own isolation, finely and cleanly.

I have a strong predisposition against well shaped, confessional plays of this sort. There is too much to show and tell and too little conflict for my taste. And if Hailey did not wholly overcome my reservations, suggesting rather than fully exploring the anguish of his characters, he shows them the rare respect of never settling for the easy answers, of scrupulously avoiding the cliché.

Carole Cooke is a delight as Louise, the sometime actress exercising a savage bitch wit, characteristic of queens, dikes and Westport widows, as a shield against the pain she feels. Hers is the show-stopping role spitting out one liners with venomous zeal. (A random choice-- O CALCUTTA is final proof that there are no small actors, only small parts.)

In comparison, the part of Marion seems pale, as if written as a somewhat eccentric foil to the bitterness of Louise, and the innocence of Estelle. But the role is transformed by the haunting and luminescent performance of Anne Meacham. As the vague unpublished essayist living in the shadow of her father's imagined greatness and coming to an uneasy accommodation with her husband's occasional affections, Miss Meacham's poignant portrayal transcends the limitations of the script. We begin to laugh at the excessive gentility, the caricatured elegance of her movement, but we halt guiltily in mid breath as we realize the admixture of shyness, awkwardness and toughness beneath.

At the play's end Louise wearily utters the line, "Let us go to Moscow." Estelle does an incredulous take and says, "Russia?" Marian, against the laughter of the audience responds, "It's from a play, darling", and with her voice faltering slightly, "The Three Sisters". It is a devastating moment. You are caught. Amused by the irony and absurdity, chuckling at the frieze they hold as the lights black out, the slight hesitation in Miss Meacham's voice lingers in the mind and lays bare the reality of pain and waste. I cannot remember being witness to so compassionate and revelatory a performance.

Of the husbands, only Ken Kercheval stands out. He exudes an ebullient comic energy as he rationalizes his terror of homosexuality and justifies his marriage to a Dupont.

Davey Marlin Jones' sense of composition, balance, and style make him the ideal director for the show. There is a grace and ease to the production which make it stand apart from and above the others done at this year at the WTC.

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The Sunshine Candle People

BRIEFS Paul Jones

A MAN IS A MAN by Brecht at Theatre Lobby

This is one of the finer and more subtle anti-war classics which theatres are still willing to attempt, and today, May 3, becomes even more relevant than ever before.

Suppose your city under martial law, or under the law of arbitrary law and order rather than humane consideration; suppose the ranks of those holding the force to be human, thinking individuals, yet subsumed under a greater power so that they not only tear but are torn themselves, playing the roles, substituting in the missing places out of a misplaced sense of responsibility. Suppose yourself asked to serve the jury duty of immediate action with a judgement more terrible than words, like guns and destruction.

There is no grey except in the matter of a man's mind; power corrupts always, here is no exception. So power must be equal for all, or not at all. Brecht has swiftly portrayed the tumult of this immorality without pointing fingers or doing violence to any individual spirit. It is a fine play. The Theatre Lobby must unfortunately suffer from a lack of the professional confidence necessary to make this good drama, and must physically suffer from a restricted staging. Yet Brecht still lives despite the setback of the technology.

WIPE-OUT GAMES by Eugene Ionesco at Arena Kreeger Theater

In the lurid, almost overtly surreal landscape of the abstract of death, Ionesco has put together a chilling quasi-documentary of the power of the human mind to forge any number of fantasies in order to explain the totally unexplainable, the mysterious. This is drama, too, which has come to Washington pretty much at the right time; for the struggle of unexplained power against the small man, the representative individual involved in what comes down to civil disobedience in making his own decisions as to what is best for him.

The scourge, the plague, the invisible, indiscriminate taking of life for no reason creates many responses in the human mind: advantage-taking for personal or misplaced mass power. These are the games: willful ignorance, mindless following, massing into defensive groups, splitting into individual cadres of hope, all of these are the means for coping against the blight, drought, the tidal wave of despair which follows the blasting of any hope.

There was humor; but it was the humor of the mad, the laugh of the hysterical. Ionesco has made a neat package of the human spirit, a map of his death where the only landmarks are the stone-henge-like time senses of those left to view the carnage and to wonder who is next, who is next, what will I do?

Yes. It is good theater down there in the new shiny halls of this immobile structure, modern theater; but as relevant, as close to a truth as it may come, it is all after the fact, after the reality, an abstract hounding its way through the already dead rather than saying "Go back, go back!"

AWAKE AND SING by Clifford Odets at Arena Stage

In three acts, separating time into years and weeks, Odets' 1930's play of the family in early urban Depression has really little impact except on the subscription audience which just feels the necessity to see what it pays for.

There is good acting; the play itself, I guess, is pretty fair, from any conventional point of view. It is just Arena's style. "AWAKE AND SING, ye that dwell in the dust," is the Biblical background from Isaiah; the consciousness of the characters, of their environment and the attempt to raise that consciousness out of the dust of poverty, the dirt of collusion, and the dark brown ooze of opportunism works well in the 1930's idiom. Fun for the whole family.

THE CARETAKER by Harold Pinter at the Open Stage : Georgetown

With a more intimate stage, closer to the audience, fine lighting, and a well modulated, even acute, sense of timing, three men staged Pinter's drama of brutal humor, yet subtle warp into meaningful irony. This irony was successful in many ways: through the language, the repetitiveness of sound patterns along with the clarity of characters and their tones, the twisting of meanings through varied use, most of these hallmarks of Pinter, but finely expressed in the play.

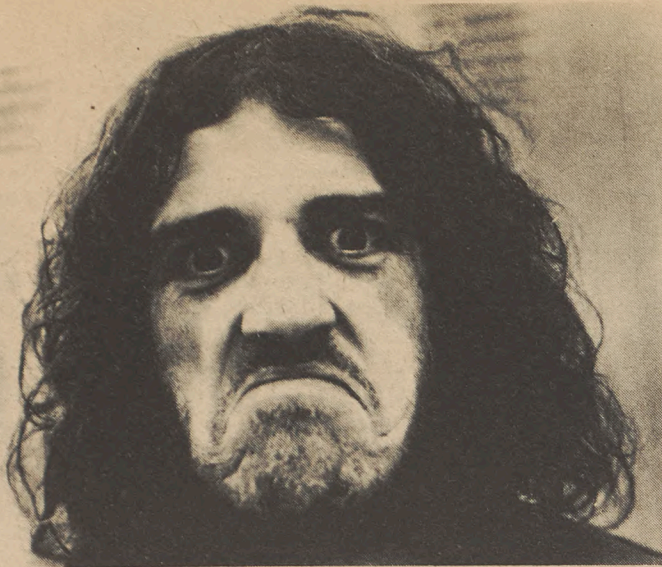
Who does take care of us? Us-- the mad or gentle, the pragmatic judger of men from little height, or the true down and out who are also the true sophisticates, men of the world? The characters are not so closely definable as my words make them out to be, for there are unknown shadings lurking in the shadows of their history, yet there is a spectrum, certainly not full, but enough to create the hard questions: who takes care, who is truly mad, to whom can we turn and bare aself or bear a self?

Without physical violence, but with a discernable violence of spirit, the play suffers potentially from over-verbalization; yet it is this potential which adds to the risk of the situation, for it is a borderline, thin and dark, between the possible and the realized: the knife, the blade of nursed madness, the weight of physical stability on top of tottering debility energized by lack.

Specifically, one problem is the mere danger in trying to follow the directions too closely; here I mean the Britishisms, the accent. If one cannot carry it, then it should not be attempted. That was a distraction. Since my first words were ripped off for last issue, I am afraid that I forget much; but this much not: this is a play worth seeing; that is my judgement.

Tom
Shales

New Film ---



COULD IT BE ANYBODY?

Even if Joe Cocker is one of those people you think you can do without, you shouldn't overlook "Joe Cocker: Mad Dogs and Englishmen," because it is really the best of rock films so far---much better and far less pretentious than "Woodstock," for one---and because even seeing Joe Cocker is not quite believing him. The number of ways to describe his grand mal approach to a song is probably infinite. Sometimes it looks like a performance of "The Mechanical Man Jerks Off" or a fellow picking up signals from Venus on his pacemaker via his hair. Whatever it is, it seems to come from inside him---like Tiny Tim, Cocker is so authentically bizarre that nobody else could really have thought him up, and he is musically exciting besides.

Pierre Adidge directed this picture with a lot of sense and a formidable lack of artsy-smartsy. The split screen sequences are probably unnecessary and slightly unmotivated, but they're nice. The stop motion airport bit is nicer still. Different songs are edited in different styles, which helps mitigate the routine structure of the film: song, backstage footage, song, airplane footage, song, bus footage, etc. This is what it boils down to but you never feel it become overly systematic. Cocker himself does not vary his attack much from song to song, yet he can be oddly effective, and David Myers' photography does its best to help him. While a "Honky Tonk Woman" by Cocker may suffer in comparison to the real thing, a "Darlin' Be Home Soon" can be a vast improvement on the original. "With a Little Help From My Friends" is more plaintively devastating than ever here, and "Space Captain" takes off.

There are other people to watch besides Cocker. One of them is guiding light Leon Russell, who tends to pose, but at least does so charismatically. Another is Sherman Smitty Jones, "King of the Road," who hustles everybody onto and off of planes and busses and recites "The Face on the Barroom Floor" at a picnic. Claudia Lennear has the only on-camera, non-Cocker solo, a fervid "Let it Be." A groupie who calls herself the Butter Queen is interviewed and there is a funny interchange between members of the band and a you-crazy-kids'er in a hotel lobby. Cocker's band is almost always outstanding and the cameras do not overlook them, either (Cocker seems uncommonly generous at sharing a spotlight--a startling propensity). Sometimes it all gets a little too groovy--groovy---you know, sweet little dog strapped into his airplane seat and all that, and Joe looking modest when confronted with adoring girlies, but, commendably I think, there is no great obsession with such ephemera as lifestyle and dope habits of the kids out there. This is actually a music film, and if the music is basically innocuous, and the film likewise, it's still hard to find fault with. The whole deal is overwhelmingly all right. Or maybe just whelmingly all right, which, under the circumstances---and we are all under the circumstances at the moment---is plenty. Good and plenty. Plenty good.

The so-called "4-track stereo sound" system of the Biograph Theatre, where the film recently opened, has its ins and outs. The tiny little speakers stuck on the walls proved suprizingly adequate when they worked. But often they didn't, and the right channel kept cutting out and then back in again. Hopefully, this has been corrected since the press screening.



HORSEPLAY

Rita tells me I use the word "cute" too much---like that little kid in Carson McCullers' "Member of the Wedding." How to ever describe "Zachariah" without saying cute, though, is a dilemma beyond me. This film is so cute it smarts. Unfortunately, even if it is cute enough for its own good---and it isn't---that still wouldn't make it cute enough for ours.

Rarely has a disjointed film shown its joint, so to speak, so clearly. After about twenty minutes of being engaging, funny, free-spirited and you-know-what, the picture gets ersatz somber and moody, settles into odd funk, finds its own frivolous plot unduly important, and bores us all into a sterile snooze. It wouldn't be easier to discern where a good idea went wrong if they had slammed a super on the screen saying "We're going thataway" when the obvious fun was in another direction.

MAD DOGS

George Englund's direction, as it happens, seems too stern and stuffy for this picture much of the time anyway. But the screenplay, by "The Firesign Theatre" and others, is the culprit. From clever reversals of Western Movie cliches, it turns to muddled biblical parody or some sort of oblique metaphor about man's best friend being man. As opposed, perhaps, to woman. This is essentially an update of the Gene Autry Ethic: Stand by your pals. But the film states it awkwardly and with a maximum amount of self obfuscation. If one finds the premise agreeable, the way it is communicated isn't.

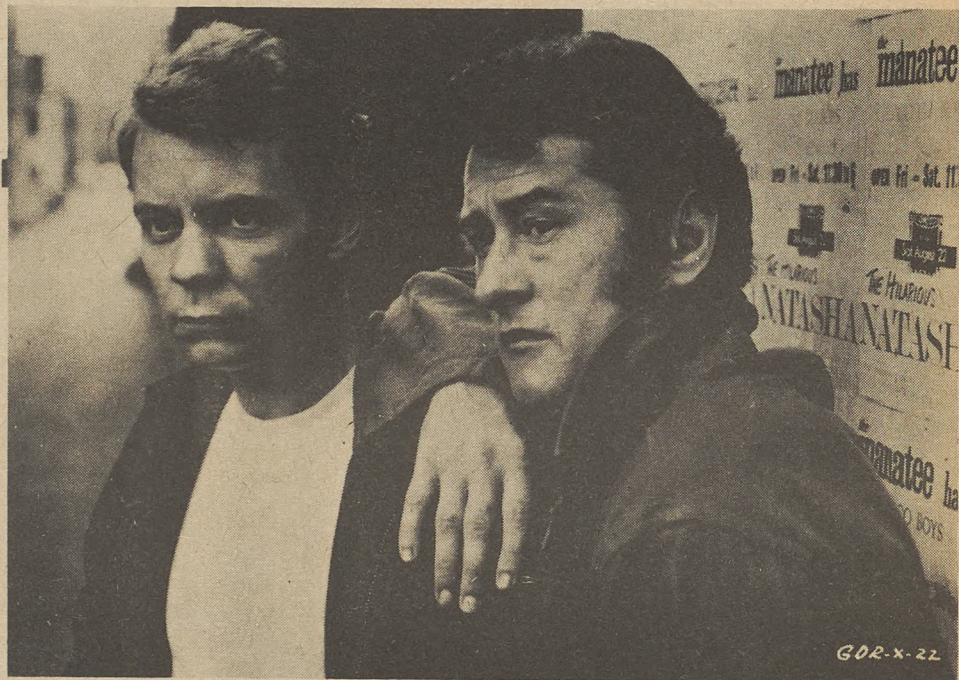
John Rubenstein, who plays the lead cowboy, fights a never ending battle against the screenplay. He is eminently pleasant throughout the picture. You can't help liking him. I dare you. Don Johnson, who survived the sinking of "The Magic Garden of Stanley Sweetheart," is another likeable lad, once you adjust to the black eyebrows with the blond hair (and some have been known never to adjust). But the prime beguilers of the story are Country Joe and the Fish as an inept band of robbers in a flamboyantly fake old west. Just when you are comfortable with all these people, though, Country Joe and the others ride off (CJ sort of wades off) leaving you and the film and John and Don pretty much stranded. Not even Elvin Bishop's toughie or William Challee's old geezer can really get it back on the right trail.

Then, too, "Zachariah" is an annoying example of Jack Valenti's super-duper moviecode in (re)action. In order to keep the film at a GP level, nudity and sex and even dope are treated very delicately. When you can feel the censor actually operating the camera of a film, it is very frustrating. The whorehouse scenes are hampered beyond repair by this sniveling diffidence, and the concept of a naked rockgroup is made ridiculous because, well, you sort of have to imagine that it's a naked rockgroup. This is a small but symptomatic example of how producers turn the moviecode into something akin to the old Hays office restrictions (a time limit on kisses, for example). Sure, you can do anything you want in a movie, but then along will come Jack J. Valenti and his company of cowards to tell you that the audience for whom you intended the picture won't be allowed into the theatre to see it (sensible theatres like the Biograph---they're aren't many---and the Walter Reade chain tend to ignore the ratings while other theatres, like the RK)-Warner chain, stick to them as if they came down on two stone tablets from the Paramount mountaintop). Here is a sickeningly graphic case of the senile using their own hangups to penalize the young while at the same time attempting to impart those sad, dead ideas to another generation.

YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR

"Goin' Down the Road", at the Outer Circle 2, reminds us that we don't hold the monopoly on despair in this country, nor on despair movies. This Canadian film, directed and edited by Donald Shebib, despairs quietly, however, and if not with particular productivity, at least with honesty. It is a strikingly honest film. Honest to goodness, to badness, and to in-between.

It is not concerned with the nomad myth, despite the easy riding title, but with the savagery of the city and the futility of working class hopes. Peter and Joey are two guys who come from the country to the big city expecting the best and getting, of course, the extreme opposite. It is another case of hopelessly vulnerable characters being set up for one bringdown after another. Watching it happen is rough on us, all the moreso because we know it is coming and that they can't really escape it. The tragedy occurs when they realize that, too, and the last foolish glaze of school boy expectation melts out of their eyes. For Joey, it happens early and he submits. For Peter, the struggle is crueler, less relenting, but our last look at him tells us, it will come, it will come. This brickwall realization has its parallels all around us. Perhaps even the most cynical of us has harbored the naive hope that, say, a murdering moron like Nixon might, in fact, one day listen to reason, or that J. Edgar Hoover would have the simple good manners to drop cold-duck dead of a heart attack, or that Agnew's son would take a fullpage ad in the New York Times to announce his coming out, or that. Or that. Or that. Waiting and hoping won't make it so.



GOIN' DOWN THE ROAD

Smashed inspirations make easy poignancies, but Shebib is graceful. He never tries to hide from us the hurtful awareness that nothing is going to go very well for these guys for very long. The bad things that do happen to them are almost classic toughbreaks, like losing a job that was crummy to begin with. The innocent ignorance of the two guys is not pitiful but touching. And Shebib's approach to their plight is totally unromanticized. Well, almost. His cinematographer, Richard Leiterman, indulges in some cliché tree panning, stark against the grey sky and all that, and a few other such touches here and there. (Some shots, especially one in the Salvation Army hostel, are badly framed to the point of distraction). At other points, though, hip banalities have been neatly avoided. We do not, for example, get the hackneyed, long-lens, heat-rising-from-asphalt shot of the car going, or goin', down the road. Generally, the style is swiftly direct. And since documentaries have conditioned us to equate graininess with truthiness, the fact that the film is blown up from 16mm to 35 does not hinder but in fact helps its veracity.

Perhaps most remarkable are the performances of the two leads--Doug McGrath as Peter and Paul Bradley as Joey. They are fantastically ordinary in appearance. When we first meet them, we are not sure if they are just bad actors or real people not needing to act. Gradually this latter interpretation dominates. The line between actor and role vanishes. Supporting players, under Shebib's direction, maintain this integrity--and that includes Nicole Morin's flauntingly sexy Nicole, the girl at the plant whom the workers placate themselves with (only by slobbering at the sight of her, that is), and Jayne Eastwood and Cayle Chernin as the flawlessly plain girls the two guys take out.

The story this film tells, and the incidents that occur, are not joltingly unfamiliar, it's true, but Shebib upholds their credibility at every point with his sensitive, unpatronizing methods. Peter's yearnings for something better than a girl full of haircurlers and a Friday night brawl are embodied in his unthinking attachment to a piece by Eric Satie (as it happens, "Trois Gymnopédies"), which he hears in a record store and buys. This is essentially a hackneyed concept, the hairy ape who would love opera if he ever heard it, but Shebib makes it valid. We believe it, just as we believe that Peter and Joey deserve everything they dream of--not because they are basically good and fine and loyal (they aren't especially) but because it had all been promised them. Bonnie and Clyde deserved it all too. How were they expected to resist it? It leered out at them from every drug store window. Sure the ads were lies--more false even than the Statue of Liberty (trade Mark, USA, Inc., all rights reserved) but how the hell were they supposed to know that?

"Goin' Down the Road" goes down painfully, and it is rather cryptically written, except for some of Peter's I-wants, which are uncomfortably poetic and out of place, but it is, much more importantly, almost ingeniously genuine. The film was rated R by the Motion Picture Association when first released, but is now marked GP. This means, undoubtedly, that some footage has been removed to satisfy god-knows-what perversions of those white zombies who rate the pictures out in Hollywood (some old ladies, old men, and a truly fucked-up shrink, in case you're interested), but what remains should be seen, heard, and felt.



FILM NEWS

The American Film Institute Theatre has announced the titles in its science-fiction series. It begins May 12 and continues through May 23. Call 554-1000 for dates and information.

Among the films scheduled:

SEVEN DAYS IN MAY (May 14)---This is not a sci-fi film at all and has no business in the program. It is a piece of passable political speculation made slightly sticky by hack writer Rod Serling's cornball copout close. Forget it.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS--(May 15)--George Pal's eminently exciting translation of an H. G. WELLS conjecture. Everything is attractively outrageous until the appearance of the Martians themselves, who are tacky critters and not very scary.

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (May 15)--Robert ("Andromeda Strain") Wise's damn civilized projection of what would happen were a visitor to land here from outer space with a message of peace. Except that the visitor turns out to be a might-makes-rightist besides--which fouls up the allegory somewhat. Still, a frighteningly plausible idea.

ALPHAVILLE (May 16)- Jean-Luc Godard's tiresome charade, with French tuffie Eddie Constantine and Anna Karina. Doesn't really belong in a sci-fi program. A mistake.

THE INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS ((May 18)--Don("The Beguiled") Siegel's super-paranoid thriller, both striking and ambiguous as metaphor, both fantastic and believable, in its own way, as prophecy. A smalltown doctor finds the people he knows being replaced by soul-less beings--identical to the originals in every way but one--that grow out of seed pods. Perhaps the most brilliant premise of any sci-fi film ever, part of its beauty being that the threat is not the result of a monster's vengeance but, in fact, of a simple cosmic mistake. Like the one that caused man to be created in the first place.

FARENHEIT 451-(May 21)- Francois Truffaut's cruelly underrated vision of the Ray Bradbury novel about a future society where creative thought is forbidden. Truffaut expertly mitigates Bradbury's mawkish romanticism and establishes the ominous aura of sometime-to-come very shrewdly. Hitchcock's favorite composer, Bernard Herrmann, wrote an exceptionally suspenseful score, and Cyril Cusack is truly menacing as the leader of the fire brigade. The one that burns books.

FORBIDDEN PLANET-(May 22)- Fascinating concepts beautifully realized in a big budget MGM adventure. There's a monster in it, but he's no fugitive from a maniac's laboratory--rather the external projection of one man's id; the "monster" within us all made doubly terrible when it turns out to be the size of a very large house. Walter Pidgeon is perfect as the unwitting creator of the beast. There's an innovational electronic score, and, in addition, MGM's ingenious creation, Robby the Robot. He can do anything but destroy life.

THIS ISLAND EARTH (also May 22)- Nothing grand or portentous about this fantasy, but it has its moments and some interesting concepts--including a planet so ravaged by warmakers that its inhabitants look to earth for help. Boy, have they got a wrong number! Interesting creatures appear in the second half. The scientists on the planet, meanwhile, all have UHF-UHF--ultra-high-foreheads.

ON THE BEACH-(May 20)-Stanley Kramer's weepy and woeful account of the last days in the life of nearly everybody. Still, it has a morbid tension and an interesting sequence in which San Francisco is found abandoned. Glittery cast includes Fred Astaire, Tony Perkins, Ava Gardner. A fun way to go.

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE-George Pal's staging of interplanetary combat includes the flooding of New York City. With UNIVERSE on May 17.

THINGS TO COME- Raymond Massey in one of H. G. Wells' films of the thirties. (on May 18).

METROPOLIS-Fritz Lang looks ahead. A funny, amazing, outlandish movie--probably overrated now and underrated then. (May 12).

T. S.

VIDEO-FESTIVAL ---Jim Carroll III

Except for a revealing news report, an occasional television special or an even rarer series, the video medium can be appreciated only as a common-grounds film festival. Appealing to all tastes, the sixty to seventy films shown each week in the Washington area can be likened to a free festival from the repertoire of the best and worst of the films of all times.

Granted, there are more poor films than fine; but from time to time there is a real gem of a filmic experience not to be missed. The following films are recommended:

MAY 10---WETA-26 10:30pm--16MM "Madlyn". Although this 30 minute feature on Madlyn Murray O'Hair is intelligent and perceptive, one wishes that it had been narrated by Kathryn Kuhlman.

MAY 12- WTOP-9 9pm--"King Kong" ! What a gas! Find yourself a 24-inch black and white set, a lot of friends and refreshments and sit back and cheer on the Great Ape in this prime time Nostalgia Revival.

MAY 15-WTTG-5 8pm---"Treasure of the Sierra Madre", 1948, is one of John Huston's greatest films and a classic of the American cinema. This epic of greed and frustration is a showcase for Huston's "stand-offish" style, used effectively to enunciate the performance of the actor (in this case, Bogart), rather than call attention to the director himself.

MAY 18- WDCA-20--11pm-"King and Country", 1965, ranks as one of the finest of expatriot American Joseph Losey's films. Peeling off the veneer that shields the military mind from the objectivity of life, Losey finds man. His style is eloquently lyrical; it's hard not to like a Losey film.

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S Photo new

The Corcoran Photography Workshop's Second Invitational

Despite apathy on the part of the press, local photography shows continue to flourish in the Washington area; eleven Washington photographers are on view at Baltimore's Maryland Institute; Icon Gallery recently concluded an exhibit of the sensitively seen photographs of Fred Day, and is presently showing the work of Earl Dotter through May, and the Corcoran Photography Workshop recently opened their Second Invitational, a group show of five photographers, several weeks ago.

There is no particular similarity to the work of the five photographers on view at the Dupont Center, yet there is an intuitive harmony between the works that is a rare quality for a group exhibit which, more often, either sacrifices the photographer's vision in favor of thematic unity or reflects a curator's viewpoint over that of the photographers' - witness the recent shows arranged by Minor White, Light to the 7th Power and Being Without Clothes, both of which suffer from these deficiencies.

In the Workshop's Second Invitational no curator's presence is felt (the curators being the photographers of the Workshop) and the photographers are given room, literally and figuratively, to express themselves with their own voices.



Of the five photographers, one is a Historical Personage, Lewis W. Hine, who fortunately has not yet been preserved as a Very Important Historical Personage which allows us the freedom to consider his work unencumbered by weighty opinions and the heavy hand of fashion.

He is perhaps the least known important photographer extant, important not only in terms of the documentary photograph which he helped pioneer, but also in terms of his vision; he saw his subjects with an economy of elaboration and a simple grace, qualities which resulted in the extraordinary clarity that characterizes so much of his work, a clarity that has only been achieved by a few other photographers in the history of the medium: Walker Evans (whose retrospective show will be on exhibit at the Corcoran in May), E. J. Bellocq, the turn of the century photographer recently discovered by Lee Friedlander, and August Sander, the German photographer, come to mind as men sharing the directness of Hine's vision.

Hine is best known for his documentary work exposing the abuses against child laborers during the twenties, work which resulted in the passing of laws to correct those abuses. He is less well known for the universal qualities of his vision. The twelve photographs on exhibit at the Dupont Center, all of which were made for the National Child Labor Committee, are not, in every case, prime examples of these qualities, but they do serve as an excellent introduction for the viewer unfamiliar with Hine's work. Those desiring a deeper knowledge of Hine's photography should go to the Library of Congress' print and photography section where over a thousand original Hine prints are on file.

The portraits of New York's Ronnie Ginniver speak in a very personal way of how Miss Ginniver feels about herself and her friends. Often violent, frequently grotesque, they are grainy half-frame hallucinatory visions, some of which are melancholy self-portraits in which beauty and revulsion seem inexplicably mixed.

For all their elements of grotesquerie, Ginniver's photographs are honest pictures with a consistent point of view, one that can be related to the currently popular 'school' of surrealism, as evidenced by the grotesque fantasies of Les Krims, or the gentler work of Duane Michaels and Ralph Gibson.

Nancy Rexroth's photographs are, for me, powerfully moving. In almost every sense, they illustrate the power of paradox in art: taken with a child's plastic camera, they are, in no sense, snapshots, but rather sophisticated images, difficult for even the trained eye to deal with, which instead of relying upon visual information, convey their emotion almost solely through the use of tonal quality.

At their best, Rexroth's photographs are evocative, mystical, feeling-pictures; at their worst, images which fall on the short side of that fine line between obscurity and revelation, resulting in photographs that seem too private to share themselves with the viewer. Those that work though, work very well indeed, in particular, a photograph of an open door (showing, minimally sketched, a yard, sunlight, Autumn?) and one, titled, "A Woman's Bed" both of which will join a very select company in my mind as images I will always be able to recall.

Incidentally, Nancy Rexroth is a Washingtonian and a graduate student at Ohio University, presently in her last year there. Her work is also on exhibit at Maryland Institute in the "Eleven Washington Photographers" show.

The other Washingtonian in the show is William Christenberry, a local sculptor, who has on view ten color photographs of Alabama, the artist's home state.

Bill is not a 'photographer'; that is, he proves that photography is truly an art of the people, and everyone, like Bill Christenberry, can buy a Brownie Hawkeye and take color photographs. Not everyone, however, has Bill Christenberry's eye: an artist's eye for subtlety of line and hue, and a feeling for his subject, expressed in suffused colors that permeate these views with a special quality of bittersweet naivete.

Although he has photographed Walker Evans country, the people and houses that Evans and James Agee immortalized a quarter of a century earlier in "Now Let Us Praise Famous Men" (one can almost see their footprints in the earth in these pictures) Christenberry has reclaimed that parcel of land for his own with these photographs that give one a feeling of true peace, a valuable feeling to have these days.

Emmett Gowin, a young photographer from Virginia and Ohio who has already gained a measure of acclaim, has contributed ten of his 'snapshots' to the Second Invitational, snapshots taken with a 4x5 camera, usually the instrument of precision and formality.

They are only snapshots in the sense that they appear, at first glance, to be pictures of his family at leisure. It is soon evident, however, that beneath the informality there are disturbing undercurrents and surreal glimpses which occasionally surface in these beautifully printed photographs. Indeed, the more one looks at them, the less casual they seem until finally, it fades away altogether, and one is left with mystery, as in the case of a photograph of a young woman named Ruth whose hair is streaming in the wind, or the photograph which presents a strange confrontation as the photographer's wife bares her chest while an old woman averts her head.

This is a show without a message as such, and certainly the assemblers of the show intended none in their aim of providing five photographers a forum in which to have their say. Yet the reviewer in seeing five such dissimilar yet harmonious bodies of work, is tempted to make analogies and form conclusions not so much about the individuals involved or the individual photographs (except to observe that for a group show, there are an extraordinary number of individually powerful images) as about the state of photography as a viable art today: where its been and where it might be heading, as evidenced by this exhibit.

Certainly, the work of Lewis Hine provides fresh evidence to discerning photographers that the snapshot - that anonymous work of art of the people - provides a powerful esthetic base on which to form an art, and in the work of many photographers the snapshot serves as a tacit or conscious primal influence - Hine and Evans of an older generation, Robert Frank, Bruce Davidson, Duane Michaels, Diane Arbus, the 'social landscape' photographers of a newer generation.

In this show, the work of Rexroth, Gowin, and Christenberry indicate new directions that this esthetic might be taking - directions which seem to indicate that the tools and methods of the snapshot are being used to make more difficult sophisticated statements, statements that have the consciousness (and sometimes the self-consciousness) of the 'art' photograph, but at the same time, incorporating the virtues of the snapshot: its commitment, its unpretentiousness, and above all, its honesty.

The Second Invitational will continue through May at the Corcoran Gallery's Dupont Center, 1503 21st Street, N.W.

Mark Power

A new show opened at the Icon Gallery on April 24th, and will run through May 24th. The photographer is Earl Dotter.

His work includes photo essays of Appalachian Mountain life, poor whites in the South, coal strip mining, the lower East Side of New York City and California.

Earl Dotter is a graduate of San Jose State and the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Most recently he lived there and is now temporarily residing in Washington.

There are over 60 black and white 5x7 prints and 80 color transparencies on a slide carousel projector. His color work is far from the usual "Kodak-oriented" photographs.

Looking at the photographs, you forget that they are simply pictures taken by another photographer-person, but instead feel as though you yourself were there in his place.

The portraits are powerful, eloquent and provocative. Staring eyes, looking deep into yours waiting for a response. His nature work is just as powerful, you can feel the coal mist and smell the air.

He has consistently captured his environment in a very honest and powerful way.

The Icon Gallery is located at 1237 22nd Street, NW and is open from 11:30-3:30, Tuesday through Saturday, and by appointment.

An excellent show!

Patricia Pearson





EUGENE McDANIELS ---the left rev. mc d.; HEADLESS HEROES OF THE APOCALYPSE (Atlantic SD 8281)

Bearing in mind that this is only one person's opinion, I shall venture to write my feelings about this album. Many people have been tremendously impressed with it though it's not the love-it-or-hate-it type. I base my luke-warm sentiments on the following two conjectures: first I find that there is really little interest in the purely musical sense (that is excluding lyrics); secondly, the lyrics are the polar opposite of subtle. Perhaps that is not straight-forward. In fact, McDaniel's writing for the most part belongs to the same genre: the protest-social comment song. Rather I think the timing for the album's release was off. The songs, although satirizing continuous problems, are about specific issues which have recently turned rhetoric and cliché. Now that we have temporarily retired the gun and the banner on the domestic front and returned to nostalgic, sweet reason, the words just don't seem to have the impact. Musically speaking, most of the pieces are based on a minor scale, unusual for "popular songs". This quality in itself enhances the uneasiness and tension of the lyrics, but sadly, McDaniel seems to exhaust it by utilizing generally uninteresting melodies and a great deal of repetition throughout the album. The over-all affect is damaged still further by an unrelenting, unvaried bass line. Perhaps my only justification for this review is my intense disappointment. Eugene McDaniel has written some fine things (in my opinion) and I felt that he fell short of reaching his full potential.

CHARLES MINGUS PRESENTS THE CHARLES MINGUS QUARTET
FEATURING ERIC DOLPHY (Barnaby--Candid Series Z 30561)

I find it difficult to believe that this album was recorded and first released eleven years ago. To say that it possesses the timeless beauty of genius is inadequate. This is more than music: it is a mirroring of men's souls and the reflections of men together. Music... notes... like thoughts and feelings are elusive, uncapturable, unsustainable, sounding until their vibrations vanish, unique in every moment and every mind. Charlie Mingus, founder of the JAZZ WORKSHOP, fathered musicians who gave of themselves freely after traveling the difficult path to self-discovery. Mingus was a task-master---he never settled for less than all a man had to give. Many couldn't take it; some stayed to learn, leaving when the maturing process had reached its inevitable conclusion. Eric Dolphy (alto sax and bass clarinet) and Ted Curson (trumpet) had decided to leave the WORKSHOP after several months of tension and had told Mingus that they felt that it was time for them to strike out on their own just before this album was recorded. The tension was dispelled and Mingus made his finest recording with a small group. It is evidence of the bonds formed between men and a superb glimpse of a highly personal means of communication. Here I will mention the personnel: Charles Mingus, bass; Eric Dolphy, alto sax and bass clarinet; Ted Curson, trumpet; and Dannie Richmond, drums (who has remained with Mingus longer than any other musician). The selections: Folk Form, No. 1; Original Faubus Fables; What Love; All the Things You Could Be by Now If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother. To attempt any description of the music would be foolish; its magic cannot be captured in words. Mingus' definition of his function in music provides probably the best description of what's happening on this album:

"What's so funny is some people think a composer is supposed to please them, but in a way a composer is a chronicler like a critic. He's supposed to report on what he's seen and lived."

Just listen to their world.

BEYOND THE BLUE HORIZON: GEORGE BENSON (CTI 6009)

This album could serve well as the non-jazz fan's introduction to jazz: it's smooth rendition and likeable thematic lines make it appealing to a wide audience. Benson achieves a structural spontaneity that pleases the ear and relaxes the mind. He gets able support from Jack DeJohnette, drums, Ron Carter on bass, Clarence Palmer plays the organ with Michael Cameron and Albert Nicholas assisting on percussion. Creed Taylor produced the LP and fortunately he omitted the heavy string section, a distinct improvement over Benson's A&M records. Miles Davis' "So What?" opens with rather conventional organ lines followed by Benson's guitar, relying on linear progressions without chords, staccatoed notes and notes drawn out till their vibrations have vanished. The second piece, "The Gentle Rain" is a pleasant ballad, straight-forward with a strong melody line. Again the organ spells out the theme and Benson skillfully weaves in and out with uneven, contrasting riffs. Ron Carter abandons "jazz" plucking and bows the bass, an interesting addition. Side Two is all George Benson compositions. "All Year" is a lively, upbeat piece with snatches borrowed from "Up Tight, Outa Sight". "Ode To A Kudu" is the first of the two most interesting and final works on the album. Its lyrical melodic line is played in chords punctuated by single notes. Benson begins alone and is joined by DeJohnette drumming simple, flowing flights. The guitar line becomes more fragmented allowing gaps to appear in the music which act like open windows through which Carter's bass with an additional melody emerge and disappear. It ends as it begins: simple and soft. The final selection, "Somewhere in the East," a graceful and textured piece is more varied but still retains its openness. The mystical qualities are all there; some passages echo the serenity of the Far East while others reflect the dark mystery and excitement of Africa. BEYOND THE BLUE HORIZON is not an exciting album: it is neither complex nor driving. It's pleasures lie in its use of traditional structures and melody; by no means could it be called nostalgic. It is refreshing and relaxing---kinda like seeing a good movie without a message.

THE CECIL TAYLOR QUARTET: AIR---FEATURING ARCHIE SHEPP 19
(Barnaby---Candid Series Z 30562)

This album is also on the Barnaby Label; it was recorded in 1960 and initially released on the now-defunct Candid Series. Cecil Taylor is one of the most significant figures in the jazz movement, ranking with Art Tatum and Bud Powell. His style, eclectic yet definitely his own could be categorized (for the aid of prospective purchasers) as a synthesis of stride and bebop. His scale-based runs, arpeggios, and unique chordal combinations are joined by driving bass lines and spasmodic staccatoed passages. Cecil Taylor cements them together with sensitive timing and phrasing. The product is at once intense, lyrical, dissonant and harmonious. His music reflects the strange elusiveness of Eric Satie.

AIR is an important recording for several reasons. Because Cecil Taylor has recorded only on a few occasions; this is the first recording session for sax player Archie Shepp; this session of October 12, and 13, 1960 signaled the end of Taylor's musical evolution and the long-standing relationship between bassist Buell Neidlinger and Dennis Charles, drummer

Side One is "Air", "This Nearby Was Mine", and "Port of Call". On the first selection, drums and bass are low while Taylor plays what is virtually a solo, stating his theme and developing it with subtlety and grace. The second piece is a jazz standard personalized by Taylor's intuitive phrasing. Side Two: "Ebb" and "Lazy Afternoon" defy adequate description-- the combinations that the quartet creates are unique, variegated tapestries of mood, difficult to verbalize as are most things of lasting value.

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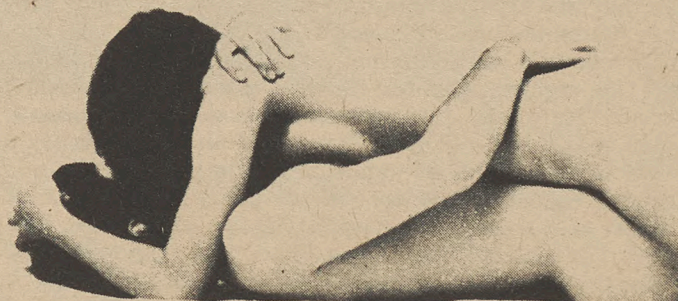
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ROBERT INDIANNA AT THE FENDRICK GALLERY

The novelty of our work derives therefore from our having moved away from simply private human concerns towards the world of nature and society of which all of us are part.

.... object is fact, not symbol.

--John Cage, Silence, 1961

"I am an American painter of signs charting the course.

I would be a people's painter as well as a painter's painter."

In the late 1950's Robert Indiana along with other artists who created the trends of the sixties determined that the emotionalistic and symbolic foundations of Abstract Expressionism were no longer a relevant point of departure. Indiana declared himself to be "an American painter of signs" when the Pop Art movement was not yet firmly established and the risks of doing so were imminent. Rauschenberg and Johns were already using letters, numbers and real objects in their work, however the term Pop Art was not used for categorization (eventually it was an ultimately damaging identification for Indiana's art). The second and greater risk was the artist's avowed Americanism in an era when the patrons of American painting were boasting of their newly won international recognition. "Not wishing to unsettle the shades of Homer, Eakins, Ryder, Sheeler, Hopper, Marin, et. al., I propose to be an American painter, not an internationalist speaking some glib Esperanto; possibly I intend to be a Yankee." It must be acknowledged that the difference between an American painter of signs and an American sign-painter is chasmic. The difference has been obscured--a supremely ironic and painful turn for the artists--by the mass media who act in response to the demands of a culture hungry public. They grabbed up material, digested it and spewed it back; so Pop Art was accepted readily as artistic novelty rather than fine art by a mass public happy once again to recognize familiar objects and to relax from the strain of interpreting Abstract Expressionism.

The evolution of Pop Art can be traced to composer John Cage, whose philosophy synthesized elements of Dadaism and Zen. He called out to the artistic community, preaching a need for an erasure of the boundary between art and life. Artists responded by claiming that even the trite and commonplace have aesthetic value.

Robert Indiana became associated with Claes Oldenburg, George Segal, Jim Dine, Roy Lichtenstein, Tom Wesselmann, James Rosenquist, Marisol, and Andy Warhol. These men heeded Cage's advice and woke up to their environment, painting de rigueur, all the materialism, spiritual emptiness, and commercialized sexuality of affluent America. Sources for their work came from the mass media's "culture" of late, discredited, i.e. advertisements, billboards, comic books, movies, and T.V. They were intent on subverting art history, commenting visually on its evolution, for they had realized that cinemascope and the "museums without walls" had changed society's perspective; abundance of reproductions had turned masterpieces into clichés with the push of a button or a turn of the dial.

Robert Indiana takes from emblems on buildings, old railroad cars, passing trucks, and the American Highways. He combines letters and numbers with brilliant colors, producing a distinctive comment on America.

His work will be at the Fendrick Gallery, 3058 M Street, through May and will definitely be worth seeing.



USA 666

Indiana can no more than anyone else separate himself from his own dreams. They are specifically his as well as being more generally part of the experience of all. USA 666, he wrote on the occasion of its recent exhibition at Sao Paulo,

"actually comes from multiple sources: the single six of my father's birth month, June; the Phillips 66 sign of the gas-oil line company he worked for--the one sign that loomed largest in my life casting its shadow across the very route that my father took daily to and from his work and standing high in a blue sky, red and green as the company colors were at that time but changed upon the death of the founder of the company. (Which three colors make up half of the "Sixth Dream" series, as they are also predominant in the "LOVE" series for they are the most charged colors of my palette bringing an optical near electric quality to my work.) It also conjures up Route 66, the highway west for Kerouac and other Americans for whom "Go West" is a common imperative, whereas for a common cold it is "Use 666", the patent medicine that is the final referent and which on small metal plates affixed to farmer's fences--black and yellow--dotted the pastures and fields like black-eyed susans in perennial bloom, alternating with the even more ubiquitous Burma-Shave advertisements that brought elementary poetry as well to the farms and byways. In perhaps lesser profusion over the countryside bloomed the EAT signs that signaled the roadside diners that were usually originally converted railway cars of a now disappeared electric interurban complex taken off their wheels and mounted on cement when the motor bus ruined and put that system out of business in the thirties. In similar cheap cafes my mother supported herself and son by offering 'home-cooked' meals for 25 cents when father disappeared behind the big 66 sign in a westerly direction out Route 66."

Coming Performances

May
10-15 1. Herbie Mann & Air
2. Emmy Lou Harris

17-22 1. Ian & Sylvia
2. David Whiffen

24-30 1. John Denver
2. Fat City

May 31-
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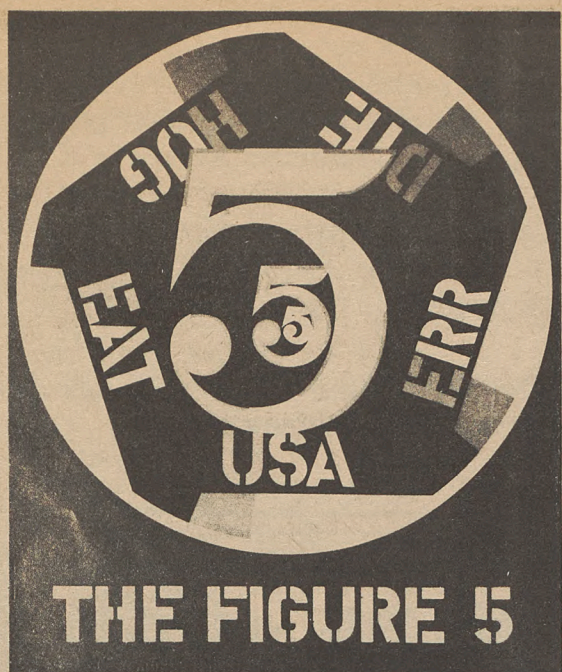
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"Arrogant admonition of the American Highway, by far the most provocative of all road signs, emblazoned too on that unexpected shape: the descending triangle. Wildly indecorous for a humorless Highway Department that never follows "Soft Shoulders" with "Supple Hips". However, Yield---as humble injunction---appropriate and pressing for the whole troubled world. So when Bertrand Russell's plea for world-wide support of his peace program went out a few years ago I responded with my first Yield Brother, transforming certain of the cartographic forms that I used to describe early Manhattan streets mentioned in "Moby Dick" in the Melville Tiptych into his "ban the bomb" symbol, four times over--visual catechism, so to speak. Ironically enough when it presented there in a benefit exhibition at Woburn Abbey, it found no takers in swinging, with-it England, drawing the non-reaction instead of what one might expect from her old Puritannic Majesty's realm, and was returned to America for sale here. Perhaps there has been too much yielding for the British; in Stand-Firm-America there is more need. That the country-side is peppered with Yield signs hasn't affected the national conscience much--particularly in our least yielding region entrenched as it is in the doctrine of White Supremacy. Against the recalcitrance of the South I have aimed the salt of the Confederacy series, Florida in this exhibition, but Mississippi too, and Alabama and Louisiana and eventually I mean to encompass all 13 of the Secessionist States whose citizens were willing to die for the perpetuation of human slavery, indicated here with "JUST AS IN THE ANATOMY OF MAN EVERY NATION MUST HAVE ITS HIND PART".



Robert Indiana, 1971.

The highway on which his American Dream paintings center is now the most distinctive feature of our landscape, put down by a nation of wanderers, both as the sign and instrument of its restlessness. It is the temporary home of the transient and the permanent home of the spiritually homeless. A sensitive foreigner, like Nabokov, may see it with incredulous wonder, but the American knows that, like the sea, it is always different but always the same and year after year becomes moreso. The sleazy diversity of roadside attractions masks this monotonous common ground of Americans. It is a great leveler. Indiana spells out this monotony by the repetition of motifs and words in each successive motifification. To him they are, in a sense, what the rivers of life were to the moralists and painters of the past, but in their numbered sequence there is no progress from innocence to experience, from birth to death. They signify a voyage in which sex, love, pleasure, danger, and death in so many lives, as on the highway, are levelled by repetition and reduced to non-experience. Love, sex, and perhaps all human relationships become HUG, sin ERR, pleasure JUKE, commerce TAKE ALL, black and yellow danger. EAT equals DIE is an equation he spelled out in his EAT/DIE (1962). Optimism and naivete are in these paintings only as they reflect the naivete of the lives he thus circumscribes or the mindless optimism and splashy colors which cheer their passage.



© Robert Indiana, 1971.

THE FIGURE 5

"I did my painting (The Figure 5) in 1963, which when subtracted by 1928 leaves 35--a number suggested by the succession of three fives (555) describing the sudden progression of the firetruck in the poet's (Charles Henry Demeuth) experience. In 1935, Demeuth died, either from an overdose or an underdose of insulin (he suffered for years from diabetes) according to Doctor Williams, the pediatrician poet who birthed thousands of babies as well as hundreds of poems, and then in 1963 the venerable doctor died, completing the unpremeditated circle of numerical coincidence woven within the "Fifth Dream".

Illustrations courtesy of the Fendrick Gallery

Commentary: from catalogue--Robert Indiana---for an exhibition organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 17 to May 27, 1968.

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The Community Bookshop is ours in a way no other shop is or ever was in this area. Legally it's a corporation in which there can be no stockholders, but every member of the corporation is considered an owner, and we are all members. The number of people who volunteer their labor to help build this non-profit bookshop is growing everyday, but we still need more. But even if you can't find time to lend a hand ordering books or sitting behind a desk or straightening shelves, you can help by buying your next issue of Rolling Stone or Fusion, or Pampharts or the Guardian, or Off Our Backs or the D.C. Gazette, at the Community Bookshop instead of wherever you have been buying them.

Better still, we can all help by turning our sisters and brothers on to the Bookshop and the books in it. If we see that there are books that should be carried but aren't, we should straighten that out by suggesting the title, or better still by ordering it ourselves for the store and for our sisters and brothers who will benefit by it. If we know some poetry freak who's been spending all his money on expensive books by well publicized poets we might bring him/or/her down and point out all the fine and often inexpensive books of poetry by poets the educational and literary tastemakers don't tell us about because it would mean the end of their arbitrary standards and influence. Or maybe you're into discovering more about women's movement because you notice there's an awful lot of people on the defensive about it, and a lot of old racist jokes have been revamped with the new butt being on the females, or gay people. The Community Bookshop always has informational pamphlets and books on the draft, CO shit, legal rights of GI's and Resisters and just plain civilians. Maybe you've heard talk of the new Black Poetry but haven't been able to find anything by a New Black Poet, only words about them by white critics. Check out the Community Bookshop. Want to know the true history of the Vietnam Conflict, the Laotian conflict, the Angolan conflict, the Jordanian conflict, all the struggles of Third World people to obtain control of their own destinies? Radical publishers? Avant-garde publishers like Something Else Press in New York, Black Swan in Chicago, etc. ? Maybe you just like to have a place to sit down when it's raining in Dupont Circle and you're not on or into that rainy day, come on over, sit down, enjoy yourself, and if you feel like it, lend a hand.

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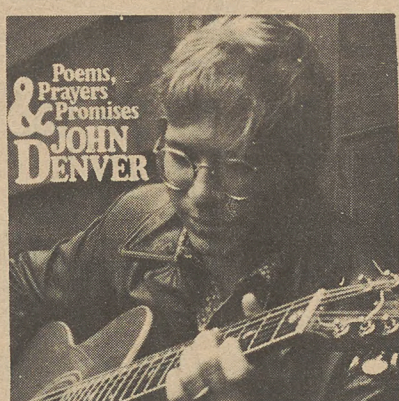
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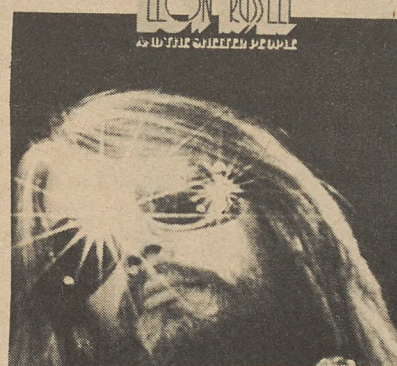
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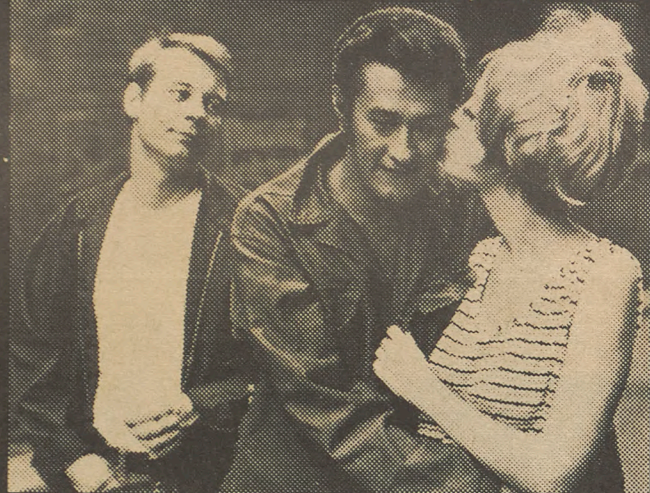
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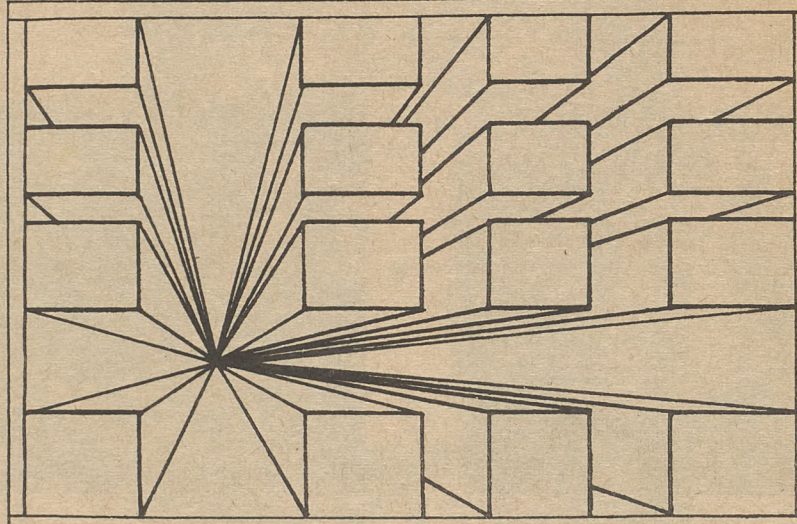
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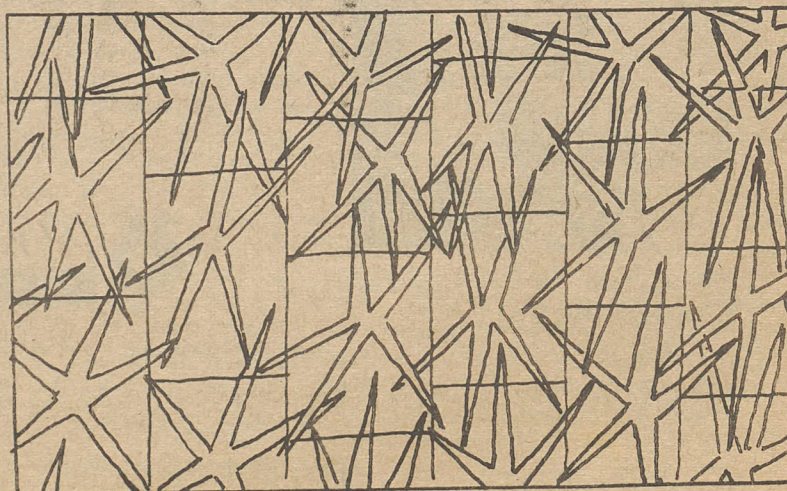
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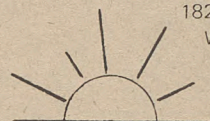
The University of Maryland will present twodays of folk music, arts and crafts booths, exhibitions, and various workshops on Saturday and Sunday, May 15th & 16th from noon until 11pm. Taking place on the Chapel Lawn at the College Park campus, the program is free and open to the public.

Performers will include Doug Kershaw, Revrend Gary Davis, Joe Hickerson, Norman Kennedy, Elizabeth Cotten, Andy Wallace, Jon Eberhart, Backward Sam Firk, Joe Glazer, Mike Quitt, and about thirty other acts. Music will include bluegrass, blues, country, traditional, and contemporary folk music.

Arts and crafts booths will line the perimeter of the festival area and will include candle making, will include candlemaking, weaving, macrame, and jewelry making among others. In addition workshops in banjo playing, union songs, Scottish folklore, and American folklore will be presented.

Opening this week at the Cellar Door as supporting act to Herbie Mann is a super-fine singer goin' by the name of Emmie Lou Harris. People talk about charisma and quality, and most people who have seen Miss Harris are eager to apply those qualities in their attempts to describe her. She is more than a singer of (her own) songs, she is a snergy-source of goodness. Whether or not you can relate to Herbie Mann, you should definitely make a point of catching Emmie Lou. She will be there through the 15th.

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TREE FROG PRODUCTIONS, the people who do the concerts at Painter's Mill just outside of Baltimore, are in a bit of trouble. They've been trying to bring good music to the Baltimore-Washington area, a difficult task in that the place where the concerts are held only can seat about 2,500 people. Ticket prices have mostly been in the \$4, 5 & 6 range, with all seats excellent and with the addition of a super sound system (rare for seating in the round) and the goodwill of the people who work for Tree Frog. They have made several experiments that have failed, and they have been hard hit by the recent wave of both free concerts and demonstrations. Neither of those two things will last too long, and if we are to have a good place for music and well-known bands, then Tree Frog does the best job I've seen around these parts. They have two concerts coming up, and you might patronize them. On the 16th, they have FREE and Mott the Hoople. On the 23d, they will feature Taj Mahal. Both shows are in the evening. For further information, call 301-367-5944. Really, they are good people, with good intentions.

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